

BY JOHN STEUBEN

# STRIKE STRATEGY

The first book of its kind  
comprising

- a practical manual for labor on the conduct of strikes
- a brief dramatic history of the strike from 1776 to the present
- an analysis of techniques employed by industry in strike situations
- a study of the qualifications for labor leadership

**STRIKE STRATEGY** by John Steuben is the first book of its kind and perhaps one of the most important yet written for the members and leaders of America's unions, as well as for all students of the labor movement.

Mr. Steuben has had a long and rugged experience in organized labor and is a leader noted throughout the country for his courage and skill. Out of that rich experience he has produced this book which is both strike history and strike manual.

Firstly Mr. Steuben believes that the strike is an integral part of American life, that in the struggle for a decent, secure life it is labor's necessary weapon. He believes further that, as a powerful economic necessity—which to be done at all must be done very well—the strike may in its conception and conduct approach the accuracy of science.

The first step in its efficient conduct is an understanding of all that has gone before, the nature of past strike history, its failures, its victories, and the reasons for both. The beginning of the book, therefore, consists of a brief dramatic history of strikes from 1776 to the present.

Then, after examining the relationship of strikes to national and local politics, Mr. Steuben explains that in most major strikes employers have used methods of actual warfare against

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## A N O T E   A B O U T   T H E   A U T H O R

*John Steuben has been active in the labor movement since his early youth. He was first a machinist who came to understand the problems of workers as a worker himself and later, in 1936, was a member of the original staff of the CIO Steel Workers Organizing Committee. It was the gigantic task of this committee to organize the tens of thousands of steel workers in the Mahoning Valley, one of the largest steel-producing centers in the world.*

*During this period he came to be "regarded by his fellows," as the New Republic said, "as one of the ablest and most conscientious field workers for the CIO."*

*In 1937 John Steuben's superb qualities as a leader brought him into national prominence in the now famous "Little Steel" strike in which he was an important factor in leading the workers in that conflict which eventually resulted in victory against Tom Girdler, head of Republic Steel.*

*Mr. Steuben is also the author of the book Labor in War-time, an analysis of labor relations during World War I. He is at present Secretary-Treasurer of the New York Hotel Front Service Employees Union, AFL.*

*This book is dedicated to the memory  
of the steel workers killed  
in the 1937 steel strike*

J O H N   S T E U B E N

STRIKE

STRATEGY



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THE strike is an integral part of American life. In the struggle for a decent, secure life it is labor's necessary weapon.

In the early history of the American labor movement most strikes were spontaneous. But for a long time now all have been actions conceived, planned, and carried out by labor unions. Notwithstanding this fact, labor has not sufficiently generalized its experience and has failed to formulate on the basis of its rich and varied strike history a set of fundamental principles of strike strategy. It is time to do so. Realistic strike strategy is the surest path to strike victory.

No two strikes, to be sure, are exactly alike. But neither are any two military battles, and yet military strategy has long been a recognized science. There are enough common elements in all strikes to make possible the establishment of a sound strike strategy. Once this has been done, it will be simple to determine the correct strategy and tactics for the preparation and conduct of each strike, taking into consideration the nature of the industry, the character of the union's objectives, the type of employer, the state of organization of the workers, the surrounding political atmosphere, and the physical set-up of the plant or industry.

It is with a view to removing strikes from the realm of guess-work that this book was undertaken. It is by no means an exhaustive study; much more needs to be thought through and developed before we can call strike strategy a science—these pages are only the first efforts in breaking new ground.

The book is divided into four major sections, the first of

which is devoted to a brief history of strikes from 1776 to the present; an examination of the relationship of strikes to politics, local and national; and an effort to apply lessons drawn from military strategy to counteract the methods of actual warfare which have been used by employers.

Part Two is designed as a manual for labor on the actual conduct of strikes. The third section contains an analysis of strikebreaking techniques used by industry, and Part Four studies the qualifications necessary for effective strike leadership.

A good deal of space in the book has been devoted to the matter of violence in time of strike. Labor, of course, needs no pointing out that such violence does not originate with the workers. Workers are fully aware that it is the employers and their agents within the ranks of organized labor who are responsible for force and violence. But the accusation of violence has been too consistently raised against labor organizers, labor unions, and the entire labor movement to pass over lightly in a book about strikes. Perhaps while arming leaders with detailed facts and giving them a solid basis for countering employer tactics, these chapters will in some measure expose the real perpetrators of violence. It is high time to tear off the mask of those who in the name of "law and order" commit every violence and throw the guilt of it on labor.

I want to thank the many friends and co-workers in the labor movement who helped me with criticism, suggestions, and material. I am particularly grateful to Lee Candea, who spent much time in doing research for this volume. It is to her that I am indebted for material on the more recent strikes.

*John Steuben*

*Grand View, New York  
February 2, 1950*

*P A R T O N E*



## The Right to Strike

### *We Are Strike Conscious*

EVER since the factory system became the basis of our mode of production, strikes have been its inseparable accompaniment. Each generation of wage earners, it seems, has been forced at one time or another to resort to the strike weapon. Notwithstanding the continuous efforts of our newspapers and other sections of the press to convince the worker that strikes are detrimental to him, to his family, and to his fellow workers, the number of strikes and the number of people involved in them have increased in direct proportion to the growth of industry. At times millions of workers are directly involved in these battles between capital and labor. At times the battles spread over many States and indirectly involve millions more.

Just what is a strike?

A strike is an organized cessation from work. It is the



collective halting of production or services in a plant, industry, or area for the purpose of obtaining concessions from employers. A strike is labor's weapon to enforce labor's demands.

In the United States all efforts to outlaw strikes, to discredit them morally, to destroy them physically, or to find formulas to stifle them at birth have failed and we dare say always will fail. To be sure, strikes have at times been done away with elsewhere. Hitler outlawed them in Germany and Mussolini in Italy. But history shows that where there is any vestige of democracy workers fight desperately and, if need be, die to maintain the inalienable right of free men to organize and strike.

It is quite understandable that people should fight for the good things of life. But why do workers fight so hard for the right to strike when the exercise of that right entails such hardships? No one suffers more from a strike than the striker and his family. An employer may lose some profits, the public may be inconvenienced, but the striker loses his entire livelihood for the duration of the battle. All income stops, economic paralysis grips the family. More often than not there are hardly any savings to fall back on. Nor can those engaged in a strike always know how it will culminate—a strike is like an illness, its end is unpredictable. Want, emotional stress and strain, physical danger, uncertainty—all these come with the strike. Yet threaten to outlaw it and the worker and his union will fight desperately to maintain the right to strike.

A multitude of factors arising out of the economic system under which we live make it imperative for the worker and his union to guard the right to strike with all the strength at their command. To abandon the strike is



to abandon the concept of wage labor; for the essence of wage labor as opposed to slave labor, is refusal to work when conditions of work become unbearable. Abraham Lincoln expressed this better than anyone else when he said:

I am glad to see that a system of labor prevails in New England under which laborers can strike when they want to, where they are not obliged to work under all circumstances. . . . I like the system which lets a man quit when he wants to and wish it might prevail everywhere. One of the reasons why I am opposed to slavery is just here. (D. J. Saposs, *Readings in Trade Unionism*.)

There is no disagreement within the ranks of labor about Lincoln's point of view. From the right to the left wing of labor there has always been unanimity as regards the necessity of preserving labor's right to strike. Leaders of the past and leaders of the present stress this point, and on more than one occasion William Green, President of the American Federation of Labor, has declared:

The fundamental difference between a free man and a serf is that the free man has the right to withhold his labor and to join with his fellows to improve the conditions under which he works. (William Green, *Labor and Democracy*.)

In a certain sense the history of American trade unionism has been the history of a continuous fight to maintain the right to strike. For nowhere in the world are workers more strike conscious than in the United States. This is all the more curious because the majority of workers here do not, as in Europe, think in terms of society being divided into distinct classes whose interests are diametrically opposed. In America the instinctive manifestations of consciousness of class express themselves in the economic rather than the political field. American workers talk

conservatively, think conservatively. For the most part in political matters they even act conservatively; we have no independent political party of labor, nor a mass Socialist or Communist movement as on the European continent and in other parts of the world. But in the use of the strike weapon American wage earners are the least conservative. Nowhere else have workers so readily and so frequently laid down their tools.

### *Safeguarding the Right to Strike*

The struggle to maintain the right to strike has been carried on with the courts, with conservative Presidents, with Congress, with powerful employer combinations, and at times even with our armed forces. It is being waged with no less fervor today. A numerically weak and inarticulate trade union movement was successful in the past. It defeated the old conspiracy laws, government by injunction and organized strikebreaking. There is every reason to believe that the trade union movement of today, 15 million strong, with the industrial form of organization and with a more advanced leadership can and will defeat all efforts to rob the worker of the freedom guaranteed by the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

At the present stage of the struggle the chief danger is not that the right to strike may be completely taken away. Rather is it that this right may be so emasculated through federal and State legislation that it would become merely theoretical. Labor has to be ever on the alert to prevent an infringement of the right to strike; for the attack is nowadays more devious than of old. Those who are bent on wresting from labor its basic right have put

on the cloak of duplicity. They profess to be labor's friends, they loudly speak of labor's "inalienable rights," but they sponsor and vote for bills which in practice destroy such rights. They would lull workers into a false security by paying lip service to the right to strike. In all the anti-strike legislation put forward in recent years the measures proposed have begun with the general statement: "Labor's right to strike is recognized." But then have followed provisions devised to rob the strike weapon of all its force.

There are periods when the right to strike is in special danger and those are the times calling for greatest watchfulness. A national emergency such as a war opens the door to an attack; it is so easy under the pretext of emergency to railroad through legislation that will permanently take away the right to strike. During both world wars employers exerted their utmost efforts to outlaw strikes for the duration of hostilities. Their efforts failed, particularly during the last war, because of labor's vigilance. The AFL and CIO were firm in their insistence that the right to strike must not be jeopardized even in times of national emergency. Typical of labor's stand on this basic issue was the declaration of the CIO convention in 1940:

Labor must ever be vigilant to guard against any action which, under the pretense of furthering national defense, will seek to deprive the workers of their fair share of those increased earnings, or to deny them their fundamental right to organize into unions of their own choice, or to strike. The protection of these rights is necessary to assure the workers that they will not be relegated to a position of economic slavery.

Labor's record during World War II, when under the inspiring leadership of Franklin Delano Roosevelt we became the world's arsenal of democracy, showed the cry



of "national emergency" to be merely a pretext for reactionaries bent on permanently outlawing strikes. Labor, realizing the anti-fascist character of the war, pigeonholed its grievances and voluntarily refrained from resorting to the strike weapon.

### *The "Cooling Off" Tactic*

Another period when labor's right to strike is in danger is when Congress and State legislatures are dominated by extreme reactionary forces. The Taft-Hartley Law was enacted in such a period. The passing of this act shows how much ground the big business interests and their lobbies have gained since the death of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and fully bears out the contention that the greatest danger is not that strikes will be illegalized outright, but, rather, that they will be so crippled through a host of provisions as to reduce their effectiveness to a minimum. The Taft-Hartley Act, for example, requires that a union having a collective bargaining agreement shall give a 60-day notice of a strike to the employer. This provision alone takes away a number of advantages. First, the element of surprise, so important in strike strategy, is practically wiped out. Second, it gives the employer two valuable months in which to prepare against the impending strike. Third, in seasonal industries—food canning, garment making, building trades, etc., etc.—a two months' delay might prove disastrous; for to be confronted with a strike after the height of the season would play havoc with the union and the workers on strike. Another provision of the Act has the force of extending the two months' delay to nearly five; the Government is granted the right, after a strike is declared in many industries, to issue an

injunction that will be in effect 80 days—during which time the workers may not strike. Labor's enemies have lately been referring to this kind of legal stalling as a "cooling-off" period. The very term denotes bias against labor. It implies that labor is so hot-headed that there is need of a federal law to cool workers off. It creates an impression in the minds of the public that the trade unions are always ready to strike at the drop of a hat.

The "cooling-off" provisions are in the Act not for the purpose of making labor think twice and encouraging it to find a solution without resorting to a strike. The real meaning of a compulsory "cooling-off" period is that a status quo condition is established for the union while the employers gather every conceivable weapon for use against the proposed strike. To expect that during the so-called "cooling-off" period the grievances of the workers will disappear is naïve, is infantile. CIO President Philip Murray hit the nail on the head when he declared: "The imposition of 'cooling-off' restraints would be a negation of collective bargaining rather than its encouragement."

A period of reaction is a time when labor has to be especially vigilant. The Taft-Hartley Act is but one of the insidious attacks on the right to strike put over in such a time. There are others. In recent years, in a number of States, laws have been adopted that tend through similar provisions seriously to weaken labor's right to strike.

### *The "National Emergency" Device*

As we noted above, the cry of "national emergency" is raised in wartime to cloak attacks on the right to strike.

Of late the term has been used in another connection. Particularly since enactment of the Taft-Hartley Law, employers, with the help of Congress, have used the phrase as a peacetime pretext to restrain and nullify labor's right to strike. When certain key industries are confronted with a strike, it is declared that if these workers strike a "national emergency" will be created.

This has brought about a curious situation in America. Those working in our basic industries, upon which our entire economy depends, are reduced to a state approximating second-class citizenship. Buttonhole makers and candlestick workers may exercise the right to strike because their cessation from work could not be said to create a "national emergency." But railroad and steel workers, coal miners and longshoremen are denied the use of the strike weapon. (This partly explains why miners, steel workers, electrical workers and longshoremen have put up the greatest resistance to the Taft-Hartley Law.)

Add to the aforesaid encroachments on labor's basic right the vicious interpretations and decisions of the National Labor Relations Board in applying the Taft-Hartley Act, and the picture becomes clear. The interpretations and decisions of the Board constitute another attack on the right to strike. What an insult it was to workers and their unions when the Board decided that not only can scabs remain in the factory, but that they have the right to vote in elections supervised by the National Labor Relations Board!

### *Strikes as Expression of Discontent*

What are the underlying causes that force workers to strike? Economists, newspapermen and radio commenta-



tors have spoken and written millions of words against strikes. They have attempted to prove that a prolonged strike eats up the very wage demands for which the workers are striking, and that it takes months to catch up financially. They have argued that most strikes end in compromise—then why not compromise in the first place? There are those who claim that there would be hardly any strikes at all were it not for a small group of selfish and power-hungry labor leaders. Increasingly we hear the argument that the “reds are responsible for strikes.” Some newspapers even absolve the leaders of the unions involved and put the blame for strikes and walkouts entirely on “Communists.” Others, again, concentrate on being great defenders of the “public,” which they portray as an innocent victim of the strike. In recent years, the cry of the “right to work” has been advanced as an argument against strikes.

These and other arguments are by now well known to the average American worker. Yet strikes, and the number of workers involved in them, do not diminish. On the contrary, as time goes on, the strike weapon is resorted to by ever new sections of wage earners such as telephone workers, bank clerks, foremen, newspapermen, teachers, engineers, insurance agents and similar groups. Indeed, during the past decade there was hardly a wage earner's family that did not have some member on the picket line.

Obviously, the arguments popularized in our press and on the radio are not convincing, and obviously, standard surface causes for this or that strike, or group of strikes do not tell the whole story of why workers strike. The strike is a social phenomenon of great significance in our economic life and cannot be explained so lightly. What the anti-strike economists and writers fail to understand



is that a strike is a *social act* and, as such, goes beyond the boundaries of the immediate and specific economic demands brought forward by the workers involved. In a certain sense a strike is an elementary, unconscious expression of revolt against conditions which the worker is no longer able to tolerate.

These broader aspects of strikes have been recognized by many government experts on labor, and by the more serious-minded economists and historians. Miss Florence Peterson, for many years a leading authority of the United States Department of Labor, in her preface to a study on strikes, says very significantly:

The strike is a *cultural* development, a conventionalized expression of discontent. It involves mass action and presupposes a belief in the efficacy of mass action. . . . A strike is an evidence of discontent and an expression of protest. While some strikes arise over minor internal shop matters, most of them have a broader application and are directed towards a change in basic working conditions or employer-employee relationships. The number of strikes, and their magnitude, is, therefore, one instance of the degree of industrial unrest existing at any particular time, or in any particular situation. ("Strikes in the United States, 1880-1936," *U. S. Dept. of Labor Bulletin*, No. 651.)

The strike is not something that workers can be talked out of. Compelling economic, political, social and psychological factors combine to make it the worker's natural expression of revolt against things as they are.

### *Striking for Dollars and Cents*

Yet the immediate grievances that bring about a strike should not be minimized when seeking the explanation of why workers strike. Strikes always have some imme-

mediate objective, are always specific, are always *for* something or *against* something immediately important to workers. In the early history of American labor the ten-hour day was the important issue. In periods when the cost of living goes up, workers strike for wage increases. During past depressions, they struck against wage cuts. In recent years, many strikes have developed around one central issue—union recognition. To stress the broader social aspects of the strike is not to lessen the significance of the immediate causes. It is merely to bring out the fact that the strike phenomenon cannot be reduced to dollars and cents.

But even from the viewpoint of dollars and cents the strike is not a losing proposition. A study of wage movements for a period of years will show that general wage increases, in peacetime, came about as a result of a strike wave, or a threatened strike wave. The latest examples are the post-war strikes that established a pattern of wage increases to meet the rise in the cost of living. We may also cite numerous examples of wage increases to non-union employees—white collar and administrative workers—*after* the union employees struck and obtained such increases. In certain unorganized industries employers have granted partial wage increases in an effort to stem the tide of organization, but in the final analysis even such types of wage increases have resulted from the fear of the strike weapon. *There is unquestionably a connection between the relatively high standard of living of American workers and their high degree of strike consciousness.*

Moreover, another factor should be taken into consideration when balancing up the credits and debits in the “dollars and cents” argument. American workers are aware

that in times of peace there is a wide discrepancy between the ability of industry to produce and the ability of the public to buy. They know that under our system of private enterprise and production for profit relatively few workers have full employment the year round. Therefore, very often a strike does not at all reduce the *annual* income of the workers involved. The manufacturer's orders remain, and are produced after the strike is over—at higher hourly or weekly rates. When the *annual* income is figured, the striker frequently finds himself ahead even with time out for the strike.

### *Do Strikes Cause Higher Prices?*

In recent years the anti-strike propagandists have concentrated on the argument that each strike wave means a dollars and cents loss to the workers because strikes are followed by a rise in prices. They elaborate on this by stating something like this: "Why are you workers so foolish? You go out on strike; you gain a wage increase; your pay envelope is slightly higher, but when you go to the grocery and furniture stores, or when you buy an automobile or refrigerator, you pay a lot more."

On the surface it sounds like a substantial argument. But when analyzed, it falls apart. Strikes or no strikes, prices have been steadily rising for the past four decades. Numerous instances could be cited from the past and present showing that prices have gone up without any relation to wage movements. Examples could also be cited of prices remaining the same after wages were cut. There is nothing automatic about price increases. They do not take place because wage increases mean a drop in profits



for the employers. A comparison of the rate of profits of large corporations before granting wage increases and after does not indicate that employer profits dropped when the workers got more pay. On the contrary, some corporations showed even higher profits.

Actually, the explanation of the price rises in recent years—at least in part—is that employers in certain basic industries took advantage of the upward adjustments in wages and increased prices. This is true of such basic industries as coal, steel, automobiles and electrical manufacturing. Employers in these and other industries raised prices not because they had to or go bankrupt; they did it in order to maintain their very high rate of profit and even increase it. Labor has been too slow in exposing the “higher prices” argument. That argument is just sand thrown in the eyes of the workers and the general public.

### *Why Not Compromise?*

How about the anti-strike argument: all strikes end in compromise, so why not compromise before striking?

To begin with, the strike has always been the weapon of *last resort*. Responsible union leaders and union members do not jump into a strike without very serious consideration of all that is involved. A union and its leaders spend many a day and many a night pondering whether all avenues of solution have been exhausted before deciding on strike action. Direct conferences with employer representatives, pressures short of a strike, utilization of mediation machinery of both the State and federal government, public appeals, and other steps are all tried before resorting to a strike. It is precisely because no reason-

able compromise can be reached that unions are forced to take strike action. The argument "why not compromise in the first place" should be directed not against unions and union leaders but against employers. Quite often an employer agrees to a compromise after the strike is declared when, by showing good faith across the conference table, he could have obtained that same compromise without a strike.

Union leaders are not inflexible. As a rule the workers and their union demand from the employers only what they think is reasonable. But they know they cannot always win all of their demands. They measure the success of a strike by the degree of justice obtained. For example, a union may consider a twenty cent hourly increase as reasonable. It may finally accept fifteen cents and be gratified that the workers have received a substantial part of what was sought for them. There is but one thing a union cannot compromise on across the conference table—and that is labor's very minimum demands.

Most wage and hour negotiations do, as a matter of fact, end up in compromise and agreement rather than in a strike. Let us take the first post-war year, 1946. It was a year of great labor disputes arising out of the rapid increase in the cost of living and the change from a wartime to a peacetime economy. Practically all the unions were involved in wage negotiations. During that year, 4,650,000 workers manned picket lines. But during the same year, the AFL had a membership of over seven million, the CIO a membership of six million, and the four independent railroad unions had a membership of 454,000. Altogether over thirteen and one-half million workers belonged to unions. Yet less than one-third of the membership resorted

to strikes. The other two-thirds compromised without strikes. It is only fair to conclude that when management bargains in good faith, labor unions are willing to compromise before striking.

As for the argument that it is selfish and "strike happy" labor leaders, and not rank and file workers, who are responsible for strikes, that notion has been fairly well destroyed by the War Labor Disputes Act, which required workers to decide by secret ballot whether or not to strike. Even a perfunctory examination of the results of such balloting will show that the workers do their own thinking; in ninety-nine out of a hundred cases the rank and file voted with overwhelming majorities for strike action when, in their opinion, it was the only avenue through which they could obtain what they considered their just demands. A strike was, is, and will remain labor's weapon of *last resort*.

### *Is the Public the Victim?*

Let us now examine the argument that the public is the "innocent victim" of strikes.

In the first place, who is the "public"? The wage earners and their families are the largest single group of consumers and are, therefore, surely a very important section of the "public." And their welfare and prosperity are certainly important not only to themselves but also to other large sections of the "public"—to grocers and clothing and furniture dealers, to doctors and dentists and lawyers, to automobile dealers and restaurant keepers and owners of movie houses. Workers with a greater buying power create conditions for greater prosperity. Workers existing on sub-



standard levels create conditions for depressions and economic crises.

Take a look at our industrial centers. Pittsburgh, Youngstown, Gary, Homestead and McKeesport are great steel centers. The prosperity of those communities depends upon the economic status of the steel worker. The same is true of Detroit, Flint, Dearborn. Did we not, during the last great depression, term some of those industrial centers "ghost towns"? Surely, it is in the interest of the "public" that the workers in those and a hundred other industrial centers shall constantly improve their economic status. Is the "public," then, the strike "victim"?

The *real* public—the workers, the farmers, the professionals, the storekeepers and the salesmen—have long realized that strikes, in that they are a means of improving the wage earner's standard of living, are in the interest of the public. The real public, conscious that underlying, intolerable conditions are responsible for the strike, displays a deep-rooted sympathy toward men on strike and takes in stride whatever inconveniences strikes create. In recent years, no amount of full-page advertisements, anti-strike editorials and radio lambasting succeeded in seriously affecting the true, warm, sympathetic feeling of the public toward those on strike. The public may be temporarily aroused against an individual labor leader—the object of a concerted and well-organized press and radio campaign—but not against those marching on the picket line, nor against the things for which they are fighting.

There was a time when "scabbing" was quite a profession, and a well paid one. Scabbery of the old-fashioned kind hardly exists today. The stigma of "scab" is sufficient



these days for social ostracism. This, in itself, attests the real public opinion regarding strikes.

Now for the last anti-strike argument: namely, the "right to work."

Raising the "right to work" argument in time of strike presupposes that those on strike have been *forced* to strike. But this, as pointed out above, is clearly an impossibility. No labor leader, regardless of how strong a personality he is, could *force* thousands of workers to leave their jobs. Scarcely a strike has taken place in recent years without the workers involved voting such action. In fact, numerous examples of strikes exist where workers laid down their tools when such action was contrary to the will and advice of their leaders.

In reality, it is not the unions but the employers who block the "right to work." A clear example is the struggle of the miners during late 1949-1950 for improved conditions and a new contract, which was blocked by the coal operators, thus forcing the miners on a 3-day work week. The miners and the union were certainly anxious to work a 5-day week. After six months of vain efforts to come to an agreement, the miners balked at continuing the limited work schedule and declared: "We want 5 days or nothing, . . . The miners are pretty damn sore about the delay. . . . We want to get the contract business settled once and for all." (*N. Y. Times*, January 15, 1950.) It is obvious in this situation who interfered with the "right to work."

Not labor leaders but employers have exerted force against working freedom. They have used every means in their power to stop workers from exercising their own free will to work or not as they saw fit. Intimidation and bribery are standard methods to prevent, or weaken, a strike.

The public relations men in the employers' pay know very well that union leaders do not and cannot force workers to strike. The "right to work" cry is raised not to defend the workers' freedom but for quite another reason. It is a slogan meant to confuse the public and the striking workers. There is a carefully disguised meaning in the phrase. It is that a small group of scabs have the right to cross a picket line. Usually the slogan is broadcast when the employer plans a back-to-work movement. But of this more will be said later. Suffice it to say here that it is only in time of strike that employers and their henchmen start talking about the "right to work." When mines, mills, and factories close down, either completely or in part, employers are very silent about the "right to work." Yet it is in this meaning of the phrase that the interest of the worker lies. It is this meaning of the "right to work" that he would like to see written into the Constitution.

## The Great Tradition

STRIKE strategy and tactics cannot be understood and mastered without some knowledge of strike history. To deal with all the strikes in the American labor movement would, obviously, be impossible here; the strike is a deep-rooted American tradition and strike struggles have been many and gigantic. We must limit ourselves to a general survey of the nature and character of those strikes which were typical for the various periods, dwelling particularly on those that introduced something new. As we examine the various types of demands, how the strikes were conducted, and what the attitudes of employer and government toward them were, gradually a strike pattern will emerge.

Among the early strikes in America was that of the printers in New York City. While the city was occupied by British troops in 1776 the printers demanded a *wage*

*increase* from their employers, and were refused. They thereupon ordered a "turn-out" and forced the employers to grant their demands.

Twenty years later, 26 Philadelphia printers conducted a successful "turn-out." This time the strike was not for but against something—a *wage reduction*. The strike call indicates that benefits were paid the strikers: "We will support," the call reads, "such of our brothers as shall be thrown out of employment on account of their refusing to work for less than \$6.00 per week." (Florence Peterson, "Strikes in the United States, 1880-1936," *Dept. of Labor Bulletin*, No. 651.)

In 1791, the Philadelphia carpenters struck a blow in the long fight to reduce the hours of labor, a fight not yet ended—they conducted the first strike for a *10-hour day*.

Between 1796 and 1799, the Federal Society of Journeymen Cordwainers (shoemakers, that is), conducted three strikes in Philadelphia. The first two were led by *strike committees*, called "tramping committees." The third introduced the *paid trade union official*—"walking delegate" so called. While the first two strikes resulted in wage increases, the third was only partly successful. It lasted ten weeks and was not without violence.

In 1800, a sailors' strike occurred in New York. They demanded a wage increase from \$10 to \$14 a month. Their *leaders were arrested and sent to prison*, and the strike was lost.

In 1805, the Philadelphia Society of Cordwainers called yet another strike. It resulted in the *first attempt of employers, in this country, to invoke the aid of the courts to prohibit strikes and organization of workers*. The leaders of the strike were prosecuted under the British common-



law doctrine for criminal conspiracy. The Court declared: "A combination of workmen to raise their wages may be considered in a twofold point of view: one is benefit to themselves . . . the other is to injure those who do not join the society. The rule of the law condemns both." (John R. Commons & Associates, *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, Vol. III.) The jury found the shoe workers "guilty of a combination to raise their wages."

Nothing daunted, the strike-conscious shoemakers in 1809 called another strike, this time in Baltimore. It was the first general industry-wide strike. According to an indictment of 39 strikers, they were charged with "compelling an employer to discharge certain employees and preventing them from obtaining employment elsewhere." This seems to indicate that the shoe workers were seeking *closed shop* conditions.

In 1824, the first known strike in which *women participated* took place in Pawtucket, R. I., when "female weavers" struck with men against a wage reduction.

A year later, a strike of women alone occurred among the tailoresses of New York. During the same year, the *first great strike for the 10-hour day* was called in Boston by six hundred carpenters.

In 1829, the first known strike of *factory operatives* occurred. It was called by the textile workers in Paterson, N. J. This is the first known instance of the calling out of the *militia to quell the strikers*.

Such were the beginnings of the great strike tradition. It was in these early struggles that a pattern was carved out. As the years went on, this pattern was elaborated and enriched. Reviewing the struggles, Florence Peterson makes these interesting and revealing observations:



The period from 1776 to 1830 not only witnessed a considerable number of industrial disputes in comparison with the relatively few persons working for wages at that time, but the causes of these strikes and the tactics pursued by the strikers and the employers bear close similarity to those existing today. These years saw the introduction by the workers of the walking delegate, strike benefits, the use of the general strike when an individual strike proved ineffective, picketing, social ostracism and sometimes physical violence towards "scabs," and the use of militia and the courts by the employers and public authorities. ("Strikes in the United States, 1880-1936," *Dept. of Labor Bulletin*, No. 651.)

There was, however, one marked difference between these strikes and those that occurred later. The early strikes were mostly spontaneous walkouts of unorganized workers, or of workers who organized expressly for strike action and disbanded after the strike.

*In the 1830's* most of the strikes developed around the workers' demands for a 10-hour day and against the rising cost of living. These strikes assumed a more militant character and spread alarm among the employers. "The times," said the *Philadelphia Gazette* of June 8, 1835, "are completely out of joint . . . our streets and squares are crowded with an idle population. Some manifestations of violence have already taken place;—our buildings are at a stand, and business generally is considerably impeded." During this period there seems to have been a *greater degree of solidarity among the workers*. When in 1836 the carpenters, masons, and stonecutters of Boston joined in a strike for the 10-hour day, the trade unions sent money and adopted resolutions pledging to stand by "Boston House Wrights who, in imitation of the noble and decided stand taken by their Revolutionary Fathers, have determined to throw off the shackles of more mercenary tyrants than

theirs." (John R. Commons, *History of Labor in the United States*, Vol. I.)

*In the 1840's.* The long depression that lasted until the gold discoveries of 1849 retarded the trade union movement and reduced the number of strikes. Those that occurred were *anti-wage-cut protests* and most of them ended in failure. The strikes were outstanding for their violence and long duration. One that deserves special mention is the Boilers strike of 1842 which arose out of a wage cut in the Pittsburgh rolling mills. The strike was lost, but three years later a second strike brought the workers a wage increase. The State of Pennsylvania was one of the main strike centers. Among the few victorious strikes was that of the twelve hundred journeymen tailors of Pennsylvania who in 1847 won wage increases after a four months' strike. In 1848, Pennsylvania passed a 10-hour law for textile and paper mills and bagging factories. Many strikes had to take place before this law was put in operation.

*In the 1850's.* The strike movement went up again in the fifties. The outstanding demands during this period were for wage increases, the closed shop, shorter hours, abolition of night work, greater frequency and regularity of wage payments, substitution of cash for store scrip and restriction of apprentices. Unlike those of the forties, the strikes ended essentially in victory for the workers. During this period there also developed a "restrike" movement. It was especially popular in the building industry where, owing to the absence of written contracts that fixed wage scales, the workers would strike in the spring of the year for wage increases and in the fall to prevent decreases. Among the interesting strikes in the fifties, from the view-

point of new demands, was the strike of 1,700 shoe workers in Philadelphia in 1859 for *uniform rates in all shops*. During the same year, the coal miners in the Monongahela Valley in Pennsylvania struck for *scales at each pit* for weighing the miners' coal.

*In the 1860's.* From the viewpoint of demands and results, the strikes during the sixties did not have the same uniformity as those in previous decades. The Civil War years developed conditions that varied from State to State and this reflected itself both in the demands and in the outcome of the strikes. A new element now entered into the strike scene—the *first national employers' association*. The Iron Moulders International, the strongest union of the time, in 1867 called a strike in Cincinnati against a 60 per cent wage cut announced by the National Stove Manufacturers and the Iron Founders Association. The strike against this association of manufacturers lasted nine months and ended in defeat for the workers. Discouraged, the union turned its attention to co-operatives. During the same period, the iron manufacturers of Pittsburgh *locked out* the puddlers in reply to a demand for wage increases. The struggle was finally settled by *arbitration*. This was the first recorded wage arbitration case in the United States. It was also during the sixties that striking New England shoe workers for the first time were threatened with competition of low-wage Orientals; Chinese from California were imported into Massachusetts as strike breakers.

*In the 1870's.* In the decade of the seventies the trade unions made remarkable progress in building national unions as well as initiating the 8-hour movement. In 1872, 100,000 workers in New York struck and *won the 8-hour*



day, mainly in the building trades. This decade also saw the birth of the "yellow dog contract." It came about as a result of an unsuccessful textile strike in Fall River, Massachusetts. When the strikers returned to work, they were forced, as the "price of re-employment," to sign agreements to join no labor union. Another innovation came in 1877, the year of "the great railroad strike." In connection with this strike, the *Federal troops were called out against the workers for the first time*. As an answer to the growing powers of industry, in the late seventies the *Knights of Labor* emerged into the open from a secret society and changed over into a *national trade union center* calling for the organization of all toilers "to check the power of wealth."

*In the 1880's*. The decade of the eighties is one of the richest in labor history. It witnessed the *birth of the AFL*; the great *mass movement for the 8-hour day*; the Haymarket riots followed by a wave of reaction; strikes and lockouts in the railroad and packing industries; the *first Congressional investigation of "labor disputes"*. Of all these, the most important development was, undoubtedly, the 8-hour day strike movement. It had now become a nation-wide struggle.

*In the 1890's*. The outstanding feature of strikes in the nineties was their appearance on a mass scale in the newly trustified basic industries. The great Homestead strike, the Pullman and miners' strikes attracted much attention. It was during the Pullman strike in 1894, led by Eugene V. Debs and the American Railway Union, that one of the most sweeping anti-strike injunctions was introduced. When the Homestead strike was lost, it was felt to be a serious setback to the trade union movement. A significant

angle of the strikes in this period was the growing demand of workers for *union recognition*—490 strikes for it as compared with 194 in the eighties.

*In the 1900's.* The struggle for the 8-hour day and union recognition remained the principal demands of the workers in the nineties. It was also during this decade that the *strike movement spread toward the Western states*. The Western Federation of Miners and, later, the *Industrial Workers of the World* were in the leadership of many Western strikes, and up to this very day the deep imprint of their militancy upon the Western labor movement remains.

*Pre-War Strikes—1910-1916.* The period between 1910 and our entry into the First World War was a time of growth for organized labor. The basic demands of the workers remained the same—the 8-hour day and union recognition. However, in 1914, with the outbreak of World War I, the workers were confronted with a new problem: the tremendous rise in the cost of living. This brought forward an additional central demand—*substantial wage increases*. In 1915 and 1916, 4,924 strikes took place. Of these, 1,386 were for wage increases. The two most important strikes during this period were the *Lawrence textile strike*, in 1912, and the *Colorado Fuel and Iron strike* in 1913-14—better known as the “Ludlow Massacre.” The significance of the Lawrence strike is that it was one of the first mass strikes led by the IWW in the East and that the strike was victorious. It was one of the early tests in militant strike strategy, and proved superior. The Colorado Fuel and Iron strike was not just an ordinary strike for higher wages. It lasted fifteen months and still remains one of the longest strikes in American history.



Over fifty people—miners, wives and children—were murdered in this strike.

*Wartime Strikes—1917-1918.* During our two years in the First World War the *strike movement reached large proportions*. Over two million workers participated in the strike struggles, despite the stubborn opposition of AFL leaders to any wartime strike movement. The chief causes were the ever rising costs of living and the determination of the workers to obtain recognition of their unions. Outstanding strikes of this period were the packinghouse strike, the lumber workers' strike in the Northwest, the machinists' strike in Bridgeport, Conn., the Seattle general strike, the coal miners' strike, and the strike of the Boston policemen.

*Post-War Open Shop Offensive—1919-1923.* After the war the strikes assumed a general defensive character with the unions fighting desperately against wage cuts and for their very existence. In the basic industries the unions were nearly wiped out, and many craft unions became mere skeletons of their former selves. Never before did the government assume such an open strikebreaking role as during the open-shop offensive; the government's main weapon was a *wholesale application of injunctions*. During this period the most important strike was the great 1919 steel strike, led by William Z. Foster and receiving a varied degree of support from 24 AFL International Unions.

*The Coolidge Period—1923-1928.* Despite the oft-repeated theory that "strikes develop in time of prosperity," during the Coolidge administration there were very few. Every year there was a decline until in 1928 there were fewer strikes than at any time since 1884. One great strike there was—the *textile strike in Passaic, N. J.*, led by

the militants of the Trade Union Educational League. The strike attracted national attention and received the support of the broad labor movement.

*The Economic Crisis—1929-1932.* When the depression came, labor unions were too weak and demoralized to fight back the *new wage-cutting offensive of the employers*. In 1930, for example, when the wage slashing campaign was at its height, only 182,975 workers were on strike. This, too, can be compared with the year 1884. A relatively large number of strikes against wage cuts were called by independent unions during the years 1929-1933. The National Textile Workers, the Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union and the National Miners Union, affiliated with the Trade Union Unity League, are some of the unions that led such strikes.

*The NRA Period—1933-1935.* With the establishment of the National Recovery Act a *strike wave once again spread from industry to industry, coast to coast*, electrifying the whole nation. Causes? The failure of employers to wipe out the wage cuts while reaping new millions of profits; the growing determination of workers to organize into their own unions, buttressed as this now was by Section 7-A of the National Recovery Act, which gave workers legal sanction to join a union of "their own choosing." The strikes were so numerous that only the most outstanding can be noted. In 1933, 30,000 miners from the "captive" and hitherto unorganized mines struck and won. The strike of 60,000 garment workers, of whom the majority were as yet unorganized, resulted in victory. Among other important strikes during this year were those of 12,000 shoe workers in Lynn, Mass., 5,000 workers of the Weirton Steel Co.; and 9,000 tool and die makers in the

automobile plants of the Detroit area. *A new upsurge had begun among the unskilled and unorganized workers.* In one year the total of workers involved in strikes jumped from 324,210 to 1,168,272. The strike wave reached its peak in 1934 and continued on into 1935, the workers actually threatening nation-wide strikes in all the major industries—automobile, textile and steel. The general strike in San Francisco; the general strike in Terre Haute, Ind.; the national textile workers strike; the magnificent strike of Auto-Lite workers in Toledo, Ohio; the significant 1-day strike of 20,000 New York City truck drivers—to warn a judge against enjoining their union (the first strike of its kind); the strike of the Camden, N. J., shipyard workers; the strike of the 12,000 New York painters; and the strike of 15,000 aluminum workers in New Kensington, Pa.—all these were part of the great strike parade. Altogether, during these two years, 2,583,908 workers participated in strikes. The demands and aims of the two years were similar, but the moods in which the strikes were conducted were very different. While in 1933 the workers struck under the illusion that they would be protected by Section 7-A, in 1934-1935, there was deep disillusionment with government labor boards. In 1933, the NRA was labor's "Magna Carta"; in 1934, it was the "National Run Around."

*CIO Strikes—1936-1941.* The CIO strikes for recognition of the newly organized industrial unions in the basic industries and for wage increases assumed proportions never dreamed of by the most optimistic, most militant labor leaders. In 1936, 788,648 workers were involved in strikes. In 1937, the number jumped to 1,860,621. In 1938 the total dipped to 688,376 but the following year it rose again



to 1,170,962. *The outstanding feature of these strikes of the late thirties was that during this period labor was definitely on the offensive*—workers fought relentlessly for wage increases and union recognition. Another outstanding characteristic was that, for the first time since the end of World War I, the workers in basic industries—such as auto, steel, rubber, electrical, etc.—participated in such great mass strikes and that nearly all ended in complete, or in substantial, victory. A unique feature of this strike wave was the introduction of the *sit-down, or stay-in, strike technique*, which proved very effective. The sit-down began in 1936 in the rubber plants in Akron, Ohio, and spread to the auto industry. It has been estimated that from September 1936 through May 1937 sit-down strikes directly involved 484,000 workers and closed plants employing 600,000 others.

Although the newly organized CIO unions led the majority of the workers engaged in strikes, the AFL unions also played a major role. In 1937, for example, 583,063—or 30% of the total workers on strike—were led by AFL unions.

In 1940 the strike wave declined sharply. The total involved in strikes dropped to 447,000 and enabled Secretary of Labor Perkins to declare that the number of strikes was much smaller than in the somewhat comparable period of national emergency, 1916-1917. In March of the following year the first wartime medium to handle many labor problems was created when President Roosevelt appointed the National Defense Mediation Board.

*World War II Strikes—1941-1945.* Even the most consistent enemies of labor must admit that its *wartime record was one of patriotism, devotion and sacrifice*. A month

before Pearl Harbor, the annual convention of the CIO declared that labor "appreciates more than any other group that in this grave crisis, mediation and peaceful solution of our industrial disputes is of the utmost importance to America." Similarly, the AFL at its convention went on record as "unequivocally committed to a policy of mediation of labor disputes." Labor adopted this attitude because of the anti-fascist character of the war, and it kept its pledge well. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics recorded that with the attack on Pearl Harbor "several strikes then in progress were immediately called off, and several threatened strikes—even where strike votes had been taken—were cancelled." In 1942 there was not a single strike authorized by the national leaders of the AFL or CIO. The only major exceptions occurring in 1943 were the coal stoppages. Labor's no-strike pledge was so well kept that when efforts were made to discredit labor within the ranks of our armed forces, Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall in August 1944 sent instructions to all orientation officers in the army stating that loss from strikes from shortly after Pearl Harbor until July 1, 1944 "represents less than one-tenth of one per cent of the total labor time available. This bears out the statement of the Secretary of Labor to Congress that the no-strike, no lock-out pledge of labor and management 'has been kept at a rate of 99%.'" Such was labor's record in a time of grave national crisis.

*Post World War II Strikes, 1945-1947.* The first two years of the post-war period saw a new strike wave with new demands and peculiarities all its own. The chief demand was for a wage increase. With the change from longer wartime hours to a 40-hour week during reconver-



sion and with elimination of wartime bonuses, the take-home pay had decreased, while the cost of living continued to increase. Nearly three and a half million workers participated in these strikes in 1945, and 4,650,000 in 1946.

The new feature of these post-war strikes was the increasing "*fringe*" demands brought forward by the unions. These included medical plans, insurance, pensions, holiday and vacation pay and portal-to-portal pay. Another feature was the *industry-wide character of the strikes*; such was the case with steel, auto, electrical and marine. The fact that the strikes of the post-war years were of longer duration than those of the late thirties indicates that opposition on the part of the employers toward organized labor was growing.

A strike of major political importance was America's first nation-wide railroad strike. This took place in May 1946. President Truman broke it in an old-fashioned way—by *threatening to use the armed forces against the strikers*, and this act, more than any other, showed Truman's complete departure from Roosevelt's labor policies. The *injunction* obtained by the Truman Administration *against the coal miners*, in November 1946 was a natural follow-up.

In this post-war period a development of great significance was the growing number of *general strikes*. At Stamford, Connecticut, in January 1946, 12,000 workers crippled the industrial life of the city in the first general strike in that State. Both the AFL and CIO participated in this stoppage in protest against the State Police breaking up the machinists' picket lines at the Yale & Towne Lock Co. In February 1946, a general strike took place in

Lancaster, Pa., in support of the striking bus and trolley men belonging to the Street & Electric Railway Employees, AFL. On March 4, 1946, 10,000 AFL and CIO workers declared a general strike in Houston, Texas, in support of an AFL union of city and county employees. During the same month in the city of Rochester, N. Y., over 30,000 AFL and CIO members, together with workers of the independent unions, tied up the city for twenty-two hours in support of the AFL Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. On July 23, 1946, 13,000 workers in Hartford, Conn., proclaimed a general strike in support of UE machinist and electrical workers. On November 22, 1946, 25,000 workers in Camden, N. J., walked out in support of newspapermen striking at the Camden *Courier-Post*. On December 3, 1946, over 100,000 AFL and CIO workers tied up the city of Oakland, California, in protest against strike-breaking efforts by the city police and Kahn's and Hasting's department stores.

Unlike the strikes of 1918 and 1919, the strikes of 1945 and 1946 were generally successful and helped to consolidate many of labor's wartime gains.

*Taft-Hartley Period—1947-1949.* The years 1947, 1948 and 1949 present an interesting strike picture. In 1947 only 2,170,000 workers went on strike—less than half as many as in 1946. In 1948 the number declined to two million. The decline can be traced to a number of factors: the anti-strike provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act; the enactment of vicious, anti-labor laws in a number of States; the leveling off of the rise in the cost of living; growing unemployment; the abandonment of militant tactics by the top leadership of the CIO; and the absence of sustained organizing campaigns by the AFL and CIO.

In 1949 the trend changed, and it became a record year for strikes, with about 3,100,000 workers involved. Union demands for pensions and social insurance plans received great impetus and became major strike issues.

The strikes that occurred did not have the same uniformity in objectives as did those of previous periods. Wage increases were among the central demands, but an increased number of other issues were involved. In 1947 some 370,000 telephone workers struck for a nation-wide collective bargaining agreement and wage increases. In 1948, 320,000 bituminous coal miners struck for a pension plan. During the same year, the East Coast longshoremen made a welfare plan one of their major demands. A novel demand made by the employees of the Keystone Dress and Rubber Company in Philadelphia was a holiday for every worker on his birthday, or, if he preferred to work, double pay. In 1949, 100,000 Ford workers struck against increased speed-up. The Brewery Workers of New York, and 7,000 workers of the Singer Sewing Machine Company also made the fight against speed-up their major demand. During this same period the UMW declared a one-week holiday. This action, John L. Lewis announced, was taken as a result of "the splendid production record" of the miners. The three outstanding strikes in 1949 were in the steel mills, the coal mines and on the Hawaiian docks.

An interesting development in connection with a number of these strikes was the *political aspect*. In April 1947, in Iowa, 100,000 AFL and CIO unions declared a one-day State-wide general strike against proposed anti-labor legislation then pending in the State legislature. In June of the same year 200,000 miners struck in protest



against the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act. One of the chief causes for the 1948 West Coast maritime strike was an attempt of the employers to eliminate the hiring hall—under a provision of the same law. Another 1948 strike growing out of the Taft-Hartley provisions broke out at a Du Pont plant in Charleston, W. Va.

Most of these strikes were of long duration. The telephone workers were out 40 days; the West Coast longshoremen 95 days; the packinghouse workers, 10 weeks; the farm equipment workers, 5 weeks; the San Francisco cab drivers, 4½ months; the New York brewery workers, 72 days; the Singer Sewing Machine workers 24 weeks; and the Chicago AFL printers 22 months.

It is to be noted that, during this period, there was, proportionately, a larger number of *service and transport workers involved* in strikes. There were the nation-wide telephone strike, the Boston, New York and Louisville bus strikes, the New York and San Francisco taxi strikes, and the Atlantic City hotel workers' strike.

The uneven result of these strikes is also of significance. The packinghouse strike ended in defeat. The miners were forced to return by court action. The East Coast and West Coast maritime strikes were successful. The Atlantic City hotel strike was lost. The taxi drivers lost in New York, and won in San Francisco. But most significant is the fact that, with the exception of the New York cab drivers, the unions that suffered strike setbacks, although temporarily weakened, were not destroyed, and some have made comebacks since.

Such, in brief, has been the course of strikes in America. The basic elements have not changed greatly since the

early days. The protagonists are the same: on one side stands the employer, often backed by the courts and the armed forces, State and federal—the government playing an ever-increasing role against organized labor; on the other side stands labor. The major difference lies in that the stage is larger, the actors more numerous, better organized. Employers have learned to act in concert. And workers, too, have learned that their strength lies in common action. Today organized labor, fighting to protect its standard of living, its jobs, its future, is 15 million strong.

Labor is becoming conscious of its strength and feels, too, the power and importance of its weapon. Looking back at its past, American labor sees that its gains have not come of themselves; employers have had to be forced into every concession they have made. Every basic economic improvement in workers' lives came about as a result of strikes, every gain had to be fought for and won. Shorter hours, higher wages, job security, curtailment of speed-up, seniority rights, vacations with pay, health benefits and pension plans—all were won on the picket line.

And so will it be, labor knows, in the foreseeable future. Not employers' humanity, not generosity, not even "enlightened self-interest" will bring labor one jot nearer its goal. History shows that labor can look only to itself and to its natural allies to fight its battles. To hold on to the gains it has already won and to make further economic advances, labor will need to resort in the future to the same weapon that served it in the past—one of its most powerful weapons, the strike.



## Strikes and Politics

### *It Was Once a "Conspiracy"*

THE early history of labor in America clearly shows that to strike has not always been recognized as an inalienable right. There was a time when a strike was considered a conspiracy against the State, and those engaged in such actions were tried, and many were convicted, in various courts. As was noted in the previous chapter, in 1805 eight Philadelphia shoemakers were convicted on charges of forming "a combination and conspiracy to raise wages." The indictment against those workers stated: "Our position is that no man is at liberty to combine, conspire, confederate and unlawfully agree to regulate the whole body of workmen in the city. The defendants are not indicted for regulating their own individual wages, but for undertaking by combination, to regulate the price of labor of others as well as their own."

Unquestionably this point of view did not spring up

spontaneously on the American continent. Like so many of our legal concepts, it was taken over from the mother country where the idea that a strike was a conspiracy was very generally held. Many workers in England were imprisoned for "leaving their work unfinished," or because of a "conspiracy" to shorten hours and raise wages, and a whole series of so-called "Combination Laws" for some fifty years prevented labor from freely exercising the right to strike. In 1824, these "Combination Laws" were repealed and brought about what is known in English labor history as the "Trade Union Emancipation."

In America, too, the legal right to strike came into being as a result of political action. The pioneers in the American labor movement fought many political battles before the right to strike was firmly established, the fight being essentially between the Federalists and the Jeffersonian democratic forces.

The same thing happened on the Continent. There, as in England and America, political action on the part of labor and other democratic forces brought about the recognition of the strike as a democratic weapon. It is therefore justifiable to conclude that the recognition of the right to strike is an outgrowth of established democratic rights.

### *How Strikes Reflect Political Conditions*

That the strike itself is a political weapon as well as an economic one is evidenced by recent national and international events. In this country during the war years organized labor, considering the defeat of fascism its most important objective, committed itself voluntarily to a no-

strike policy. Labor was willing to subordinate its economic and other grievances to this main objective. British labor adopted a similar position. On the other hand, during the same period workers and their underground organizations in Nazi-occupied lands conducted a vigorous strike policy, notwithstanding the threat of death decreed by their Nazi overlords. Economic betterment was held to be the least objective of these strikes. They were essentially political in character and were conducted for the purpose of weakening the military position of their mortal enemy, fascism.

During the first two post-war years the reverse process took place. In the United States there was a major strike wave, whereas European workers after their liberation engaged in scarcely any strike struggles. Organized labor in many European countries made a major contribution to post-war reconstruction by making uninterrupted and increased production its major objective. The reason for this bears on politics. In many European countries the people established pro-Labor, pro-Socialist or pro-Communist governments. To a varying degree this was true of England, France, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Poland and other European nations. The newly established, or extended, democracies concerned themselves with the vital economic, social, and political needs of the workers; hence a great many of their economic problems were solved through progressive legislation rather than through strikes. A great many industries on the continent were socialized, production for profit was eliminated and with it went many of the methods of exploitation which are the economic roots for strikes.

The close relationship between strikes and politics was

again demonstrated in the period 1947-1949. As soon as the coalition governments of France, Italy, and other parts of Western Europe went out of existence, great strike waves developed in those countries. In the United States, during the same years, a number of strikes occurred that would not have taken place had it not been for the oppressive, anti-labor Taft-Hartley Act. The long printers' and West Coast longshoremen's strikes are cases in point.

All this leads to the conclusion that the number of strikes in a given country and their character are a barometer of the political situation in that country; in countries where workers enjoy a maximum degree of democratic rights and play an important political role, and where production for profit has been curtailed or eliminated, the use of the strike weapon is reduced to a minimum.

This is as true for the United States as for other countries, but several elements are present here that obscure the barometer reading. Certain it is that American labor, like labor elsewhere, won many of its objectives through political measures in periods when a progressive administration was in the saddle. Just as certain is it that labor has been forced to resort to the strike weapon to win back the rights taken from workers in a period of reaction. During the decade 1937-1947, the right to belong to a union and the right of unions as collective bargaining agencies were established by the Wagner Act. Although there were many strikes during this period precipitated by employers' efforts to curtail the rights granted under the Act, many unions obtained recognition not through picket lines but through National Labor Relations Board elections. On the other hand, the Taft-Hartley Act, which has taken away many of labor's privileges under the Wagner Act, has pro-



voked a number of strikes that might not have taken place had it not been for the enactment of this law. Also as a result, a growing number of unions refused to sign contracts containing no-strike clauses.

### *Political Aspects of Strike Strategy*

Of late, organized labor has been increasingly charged with conducting "political strikes." This accusation was pressed particularly against John L. Lewis and the UMW, Harry Bridges and the West Coast longshoremen, Woodruff Randolph and the International Typographical Union, and many other unions. The truth is that in most cases: politics are injected not by the unions, but by the government and the employers. Life itself forces the major strikes to assume a political character. Who can deny today that the government virtually has life and death power over labor unions? Who can deny the powers of government in our entire economy? Who can deny the government's hand in a vast employment role? Finally, can labor close its eyes to so much federal and State legislation that affects directly and immediately the course of any strike? Is it not a fact that at no time in our history were unions under so much political supervision as they are today?

Were not the West Coast longshoremen and the printers forced to strike because of Taft-Hartley? Did not John L. Lewis publicly declare during the 1949 coal miners' strike that the dispute could be settled provided the government did not interfere? And was not the Hawaii dock workers' strike prolonged because of such interference?

In stressing the political aspects of strikes, we point out only what is real; it is not intended here to give color to



the false notion that labor conducts "political strikes." The intent is merely to point out the realities and the need for labor to be constantly vigilant politically in order to preserve the right to strike.

The understanding that mass strikes assume a political character even though the demands of the workers may be of an economic nature lies at the very base of strike strategy. The failure of some labor leaders to recognize this important fact in the preparation for, and the conduct of, strikes has often been detrimental to the struggle; characterizing a strike as a purely economic battle of the workers has often made it comparatively easy for the employer to enlist "the law" on his side. Strike strategy must take political factors into consideration. For strike strategy does not consist merely of the organizational routine in the conduct of a strike. It calls for the evaluation of all the forces at work—both favorable and unfavorable—and the planning and execution, on the basis of such analysis, of a course of action that will spell victory. It is hardly possible to work out the correct strategy for a given strike unless the analysis includes an evaluation of the political situation on a national, State, county and city basis.

### *The Fight for Labor Legislation*

What is meant by a strike assuming a political character? Or, as a "practical" trade unionist would put it: what has a strike to do with politics?

Every movement in which wage earners, as a distinct group in society, band together against employers, as another distinct group in society, in order to bring about certain changes by "pressure from without" is a *political*

*movement*. For example, a strike to obtain shorter hours in a single factory or trade is an economic movement; whereas, a movement to obtain shorter hours *by law* is a political movement. The history of the labor movement in the United States is rich with examples of political movements growing out of individual economic struggles of the workers.

Take the history of the 8-hour-day movement in America. Here is a perfect example of how labor over a period of decades battled on two fronts—economic and political—for the attainment of a shorter work day. This struggle began in single crafts and towns. With the growth of industry the fight for shorter hours assumed a national character. In 1884, the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions at its convention resolved that “eight hours shall constitute a legal day’s work, from and after May 1, 1886.” This was to be attained through a general strike. On that date some 340,000 workers took part in great demonstrations for the 8-hour day, and ever since then the 8-hour-day fight has loomed big in all major strikes. This struggle more or less culminated in 1938 when Congress enacted the Fair Labor Standards Act. The law was tested and declared constitutional by the Supreme Court in February 1941.

But turning mass pressure toward securing favorable labor legislation is only one of many ways in which economic struggles can assume a political character. Often striking workers are confronted by the armed forces of the federal and State governments, and then the economic struggle assumes a highly political character. For once the troops are called in, it is no longer a struggle between workers and employers; the government begins to play a

very decisive role and often determines the outcome of the strike.

The use of armed forces against strikes is all too prevalent in the United States. During the great railroad strike of 1877 President Hayes sent Federal troops to break the strike. In 1894 President Cleveland sent troops against the Pullman strikers. In 1897 President McKinley rushed troops against striking metal miners in the Idaho Coeur d'Alenes mine. In 1919 President Wilson sent troops to Seattle during the general strike. Soon after, President Harding ordered federal troops into Southern Virginia to break a strike of coal miners. Even President Roosevelt, a great friend of labor, used Federal troops to break the aircraft workers' strike in Englewood, California in 1941. In 1946 President Truman threatened the striking railroad workers with the use of armed forces.

The use of the National Guard against strikers has been even more frequent. In 1937 alone, at least twenty cities in nine States were occupied by 10,000 Guardsmen, and another 6,000 were mobilized and ready for strike duty. In March 1948, members of the United Packinghouse Workers of America, CIO, employed in the "Big Four" packing houses—Armour, Cudahy, Swift and Wilson—were on a 67-day strike for a wage increase. The strike spread to nine States. It was one of the major post-war strikes in which employers set themselves the objective of destroying a union. Governor Luther W. Youngdahl of Minnesota sent National Guard detachments to Albert Lea to "protect" the scabs. Troops were also designated for duty at Swift and Armour plants at South St. Paul. In Iowa, Governor Robert D. Blue ordered 1,000 National Guardsmen to Waterloo to "protect" the strike-bound Roth Packing Company plant.



## *Courts Against Picket Lines*

The use of the courts and judge-made laws against strikers also testifies to the political character of strikes. Over the years, "legal" actions against strikers have been standard weapons of employers, and many an injunction has broken a strike. For a time the Norris-La Guardia Anti-Injunction Law did away with this "legal" method of delivering a blow below the belt, but with the enactment of the Taft-Hartley Act organized labor is once again confronted with a real menace.

The injunction is a very simple and effective device. All that an employer has to do to obtain one is submit affidavits to a judge, *charging* that the strikers, or the union, are causing injuries to his business. The judge accepts the charges as facts and issues a "preliminary restraining order." The strikers, with no opportunity to answer, are commanded by this order to abide by the court order. As a rule, the "temporary injunction" lasts for the duration of the strike. These injunctions are so sweeping that, if carried out, they would strangle any strike or union. They outlaw the workers' right to organize, to strike, and to picket, as well as their right of free speech and assembly. Charlotte Todes, in her pamphlet "Injunction Menace" writes:

Many other acts, commonly considered legal—distributing literature, paying strike benefits, maintaining tent colonies, parading and holding union meetings—have been made crimes under these injunctions. The boycott, sympathy strikes and refusal to work on non-union materials have also been made illegal by injunctions.

Injunctions were first used as strikebreaking devices against the Knights of Labor in the 1880's. With the passage of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act in 1890, injunctions



were applied against labor on a large scale. A few of the more recent cases follow.

In 1927 the higher courts upheld twelve injunctions issued on behalf of the Red Jacket Consolidated Coal & Coke Co., prohibiting the UMWA to organize miners of the Southern West Virginia coal fields. This injunction also prohibited the sending of funds for organization and relief purposes and enjoined the union from maintaining tent colonies in the vicinity of the mines. A Federal District Court in Ohio, in an injunction against the miners, stopped them from "displaying any signs or banners containing any language designed to intimidate or insult employees, or prospective employees, within a radius of ten miles of the mines."

In 1931 in Tampa, Florida, a federal injunction prohibited 14,000 tobacco workers from "continuing to maintain and conduct an organization known as the Tobacco Workers Industrial Union."

In April 1947, during the nation-wide strike of 300,000 telephone workers, the New Jersey State Legislature enacted a drastic public utility anti-strike law. The Governor and his State machinery took over the task of breaking the strike. The new law provided that unless the workers returned to work, the union would be fined \$10,000 for each day of the strike. Individual strikers became liable to fines of \$250 and \$500 a day and/or 30 days in jail if convicted of remaining on strike in defiance of the law. Picketing was declared illegal. In this instance the union and its leadership defied the law by remaining on strike and thus turned the telephone strike into a major political event in the State of New Jersey.

During the days of the New Deal the fights of many

courts against unionism subsided. But the Taft-Hartley law brought back the courts as a major weapon against organized labor. Among other things, this Act made the unions liable to damage suits. Judge Goldsborough's decision, imposing a fine on the United Mine Workers and John L. Lewis, is now well known. During the 1948 strike of the CIO Oil Workers, more than thirty damage suits, amounting to 30 million dollars, were instituted against the union. The AFL teamsters have been battling against similar "damage suits." During the first seven months of this Act, law suits amounting to over 15 million dollars were filed against unions.

### *State Anti-Strike Laws*

Following the pattern of the Taft-Hartley Act, in thirty States "little acts" were established, some of them even worse than the "big act." According to a study of the Labor Research Association, these State laws included "bans on union security provisions, mass picketing, secondary boycotts and jurisdictional strikes, requirements for registration of unions and filing of financial reports; and clauses prohibiting or delaying strike action in certain industries." (*Labor Fact Book*, 9.)

Some States in their anti-labor frenzy reached the height of absurdity by adopting "right to work" constitutional amendments, or outlawing the closed shop and union shop. Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Iowa, Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia took such action. In New Hampshire and Massachusetts, union security contracts were restricted. Laws restricting, or regulating, picketing

were enacted in Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Michigan, Missouri, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Utah and Virginia. Jurisdictional strikes were completely outlawed in California, Iowa, Indiana, Mississippi and Pennsylvania. Also, strikes of public employees were outlawed in Michigan, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas. In a number of States, strikes in public utilities were restricted, and in still other States, limitations were placed on union check-offs.

The use of troops and injunctions, the adoption of all kinds of city and State ordinances against strikers, and the anti-labor actions of the courts create a condition where most strikes, originating as purely economic struggles, assume a highly political character. The failure on the part of some labor leaders to recognize "politics" in strikes has resulted in lack of independent political consciousness among the workers. This in turn has resulted in failure to create labor's own political weapons. All of which has very often resulted in placing striking workers in a defensive position.

### *"Emergency" Laws*

The need to recognize the political character of strikes will become increasingly important with time. Strikes today do not involve just a few carpenters or dressmakers as once they did. The American labor movement consists of some 15 million organized workers. Most of our basic and mass production industries are organized, and a strike in any one involves hundreds of thousands of workers. A strike on the railroads, in the coal fields, in the



steel mills or in the auto plants has immediate political repercussions on a national, and even international, scale. To look upon strikes, therefore, as purely economic events, is outmoded thinking. Employers are not so naïve. They recognize the political nature of a great strike and turn it to account. They contact Congressmen to speak out against a strike, and often threaten labor with punitive legislation. Nor are they slow in utilizing the courts, the press, the radio and local and State authorities. In the post-war strikes, particularly in the coal and railroad industries, the employers faded into the background while various government agencies took the lead in strikebreaking.

Under special "emergency laws," it is possible for a President of the United States to "take over" basic industries confronted with a strike situation. This actually happened in 1948 when railroad workers threatened to walk out. By a Presidential order the Army "took over" in order to stave off the strike. President Truman even threatened to induct the railroad workers into the armed forces. From there on, the railroad workers had to negotiate with Uncle Sam, rather than with the railroad operators. The political character of such a situation was obvious and its purpose clear; the "seizing" of the railroads brought about only one major change: namely, the railroad workers were enjoined from striking. Everything else—profits, management, etc.—remained the same. More. A number of leading railroad officials were given Army commissions, thus doubling their authority. The *New York Post* of May 14 published an article entitled "Army Runs the Railroads, but Only on Paper." The article vividly described the real set-up: "There are no Colonels sitting behind railroad Presidents, looking over their shoulders at



papers on the desk, and telling them what to do," it said, and went on about how Mr. William S. Carr, superintendent of the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad, was "called into service" and became Colonel Carr, with the title of "Deputy Regional Director" for the Army's railroad operation. His superior officer "for the duration" was Gustav Metzman, the President of the New York Central Railroad, who had been sworn in as an Army Colonel to be Commander of the Eastern Regional Headquarters. The *New York Post* made this interesting comment: "Col. Metzman, the Regional Chief, is keeping watch on Metzman, the railroad President."

With the destruction of the Wagner Act, and the enactment of the 1947 Labor-Management Relations Act, the political coloration of strikes has become more pronounced than ever. This Act, by taking away political rights labor won during the last fifty years or more, creates conditions that will necessitate strikes which will be almost entirely political in character. Strike strategists who recognize the political aspects of strikes and are prepared to turn them to account are much wiser labor leaders, and stand a better chance to score substantial victories.

Sooner or later, organized labor is bound to realize that its past gains will never be secure and its future aspirations may never become a reality without independent political action. Our own past history and the history of organized labor throughout the world points to the need for such action. In fact it is not conceivable that the American trade union movement can make substantial headway without becoming an independent political force completely divorced from the two old parties which have proved to be anti-labor.

## Application of Military Strategy

### *Military and Strike Principles Compared*

A STRIKE is a battle—frequently of large proportions—between two opposing social forces. Is it possible to apply to the battle of social forces basic ideas of military strategy—fighting on the offensive; importance of morale; element of surprise; discipline; mobilization of reserves; capturing the initiative? The answer becomes self-evident when the question is put in the negative thus: Is it possible to win a strike by allowing the employers to place the union and the strikers on the defensive? Is it possible to go through a long strike without high morale? Can strike leaders disregard the need for the strictest discipline? Is it conceivable that a difficult strike can be won without the mobilization of the union's reserves? Obviously not.

How about the yet more fundamental principles of warfare established by the great German military strategist,

General Karl von Clausewitz? Is it possible to apply them to the conduct of a strike? It is. At least four principles may be so applied.

*First Principle.* "To bend all strength which may exist to the very utmost. Any weakening of forces removes the possibility of reaching the goal. Even if success is fairly certain, it would be highly indiscreet not to bend maximum strength, to make it absolutely certain, because such reinforcement cannot have unfavorable consequences."

When a union is engaged in a decisive strike battle, no resources may be spared; the union simply must "bend all strength to the very utmost." The outcome of such a strike may well decide the future of the union and everything must be thrown in to make certain that the strike will be won. In recent years the strikes in the coal fields, in the steel industry, in the electrical and other basic industries have all been conducted on this principle.

*Second Principle.* "To concentrate all possible forces there where it is necessary to deliver a decisive blow. If necessary, to submit to setbacks at secondary points in order to guarantee success on the main point."

Clearly, the principle of concentrating all possible forces "there where it is necessary to deliver a decisive blow" can and must be applied to strike strategy. In the case of a company-wide strike at Ford, this would mean concentration first of all on the Dearborn plant. A general strike in the steel industry would necessitate concentration on the United States Steel Corporation.

*Third Principle.* "Not to lose time. To rapidly strangle in its embryo enemy undertakings and incline public opinion to our side."

To "rapidly strangle enemy undertakings" is a life and

death problem for the strikers and their leaders. Such "enemy undertakings" could be a number of things. They could be back-to-work movements; the importing of scabs; demoralizing rumors; an anti-strike campaign in the press; or efforts to split the ranks of the strikers.

*Fourth Principle.* "To utilize all our victories with the greatest of energy."

This principle has been applied most successfully by the United Mine Workers. On many occasions they signed contracts with the Northern coal operators and then utilized this victory to achieve a similar goal with the Southern operators. In the electrical manufacturing industry the principle was applied like this: a strike occurred. General Electric came to terms with the union, Westinghouse remained adamant. The victory in General Electric was utilized "with the greatest of energy" to speed victory in Westinghouse. The union did this in a number of ways. It pointed out to the public that the union demands were just; it bolstered the morale of Westinghouse workers by pointing to victory at GE; it placed Westinghouse in a difficult competitive position.

### *How Strikes and Warfare Differ*

It should not be forgotten, however, when attempting to apply military principles to strike strategy, that there are a number of fundamental differences between a regular army and an army of strikers. The following are the most important:

1. Most regular armies are built on a compulsory basis; an army of strikers is a voluntary army. Aside from moral suasion, a union possesses no power over its forces. Em-



ployers, on the other hand, possess tremendous resources which they can bring to bear on workers to force them not to enter the struggle.

2. A regular army fights beyond its borders or against an aggressor within the country. The army of strikers does not fight a foreign enemy. The fight takes place within the country, in and around the location of the factory.

3. The general staff of an army and its corps of officers are carefully selected after years of observation and training. Espionage within the commanding group is, therefore, rare. The general staff of the striking workers, on the other hand, gathers more or less accidentally and in a hurry. Company elements penetrate easily, and these have a tremendous influence on the course and outcome of the struggle. Furthermore, the temptation to corruption and disloyalty is greater in a union than in the army—in part because the element of risk is less.

4. The rear of a regular army is the whole country, and in time of war everything in the rear is geared to the front. The rear of a strike army is the workers' families, the rest of the workers in the same industry, and only on rare occasions is it the labor movement as a whole.

5. A regular army is well equipped with military doctrines and principles tested in a thousand battles. Labor unions, unfortunately, seldom study the experience of strikes other than their own, and sometimes not even that.

6. An army possesses a powerful agitational apparatus which molds the morale of its men—as well as sustaining morale at the rear. A strikers' army seldom possesses such machinery while the employers have at their disposal the press, radio, and other opinion-molding instruments.

## *Industrial Munitions Against Unions*

Much as the strike army differs from the military army, the likeness remains in that strikers still are soldiers in a battle. Strike strategists must not, and indeed cannot, forget this; the employers will not let them, for more and more of them nowadays regard the strike from a military point of view and prepare for it in a military, or semi-military, fashion. The public relations staffs of large corporations would deny this statement and term it propaganda. But the facts given in this chapter—all drawn from the hearings of the La Follette Senate Civil Liberties Committee—will show that the main burden for giving strikes a military aspect lies with the employers and the government. It is they who force labor into a position where it must meet tactic with tactic in order to defend strikers against superior forces.

“Industrial munitions” are a big business in the United States. Several national companies have been specializing for some time in tear gas, machine guns, rifles and pistols for corporations whose workers were preparing to strike. In 1937 the La Follette Senate Civil Liberties Committee brought to light startling figures on the amount of tear gas purchased by corporations and local authorities in industrial centers for use in time of strikes. The Republic Steel Corporation and its subsidiaries during the strike in May and June 1937, purchased tear and sickening gas equipment to the sum of \$49,439.87; Bethlehem Steel’s tear gas bill during the same period amounted to \$27,435.31; municipalities in the area affected by the steel strike spent \$34,278 on gas.

The Senate records show that every major industrial corporation in the country was stocked with tear gas. This same record shows that the total sales of tear gas by Federal Laboratories, Inc. alone was as follows:

1934 .....	\$665,531.99
1935 .....	504,369.84
1936 .....	431,370.59
Total .....	<hr/> \$1,601,272.42

It must come as a shock to some to learn that industrial corporations and industrial municipalities have spent in a period of three years over a million and a half dollars for tear gas and equipment to use in strikebreaking. But tear gas is only one item. During this same period, just two corporations—Republic Steel and Weirton Steel—purchased from Smith & Wesson, Inc. 228 revolvers. These and other corporations bought hundreds of other revolvers, submachine guns, thousands of rounds of ammunition and other military equipment.

That industrial munitions play a major role in the strike strategy of employers was pointed out by the Senate Civil Liberties Committee. In March 1939, Senator La Follette presented to the Senate a special report on this subject. In it he declared that there are four chief instrumentalities of anti-unionism: namely, strikebreaking, industrial espionage, private police systems and industrial munitions.

Industrial munitions represent a greater danger in our industrial life than is generally recognized. Private arsenals and the well-trained private military force at the disposal of reactionary, union-hating employers could physically threaten our trade unions, and could even sustain an armed fascist movement in this country. Was this not the

tragic experience of German Labor when steel magnate Fritz Thyssen and his associates, together with banker Schacht, financed and armed the Nazis prior to their coming into power? In the late thirties all the reactionary forces in this country built up Tom Girdler as a "national hero." Girdler was pictured as the great industrialist leading a crusade against a "labor armed rebellion." But the La Follette Committee uncovered huge private arsenals in Republic Steel and Youngstown Sheet & Tube plants of a magnitude sufficient to start a civil war. Study the following chart carefully. These facts must not remain buried in the dusty records of the Senate. Strike leaders should know what they are up against when they prepare for a strike battle with steel and other powerful corporations.

INVENTORIES OF PRIVATE ARSENALS OF REPUBLIC STEEL CORPORATION AND THE YOUNGSTOWN SHEET & TUBE CO.

Type of Munitions	Republic Steel Corp.	Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co.	Total
<i>Guns:</i>	<i>Number of</i>	<i>Number of</i>	<i>Number of</i>
<i>Firearms</i>	<i>guns</i>	<i>guns</i>	<i>guns</i>
Revolvers .....	552	453	1,005
Rifles .....	64	369	433
Machine guns .....	0	8	8
Shotguns .....	245	190	435
Total guns .....	861	1,020	1,881
<i>Gas guns</i>			
Long range .....	143	14	157
Machine guns .....	0	24	24
Billie clubs .....	58	71	129
Revolvers .....	3	0	3
Total gas guns .....	204	109	313



<i>Ammunition:</i>	<i>Number of</i>	<i>Number of</i>	<i>Number of</i>
<i>Ball cartridges</i>	<i>rounds</i>	<i>rounds</i>	<i>rounds</i>
Revolver .....	17,650	19,487	37,137
Rifle .....	59,350	16,683	76,033
Machine gun .....	500	40,260	40,760
Total rounds .....	77,500	76,430	153,930
<i>Shot cartridges</i>			
Shot gun shells .....	5,784	3,950	9,734
Machine gun .....	500	0	500
Total rounds .....	6,284	3,950	10,234
<i>Gas</i>			
Hand grenades .....	2,707	689	3,396
Projectiles and shells ....	4,033	301	4,334
Machine gun projectiles ..	0	1,357	1,357
Billie club shells .....	163	789	952
Revolver shells .....	25	0	25
Total rounds .....	6,928	3,136	10,064

The stocking of industrial munitions, particularly gas, is not limited to employers in a single industry. The same La Follette report states: "The committee recorded, and tabulated from the books of munitions vendors, \$1,255,-312.55 worth of purchases of gas and gas equipment. Approximately one-half of this amount is listed as purchased by large industrial employers, and the remainder by local and State law-enforcement agencies." The report then lists the largest purchasers of gas equipment.

#### CORPORATIONS OR EMPLOYERS ASSOCIATIONS

Republic Steel Corporation .....	\$ 79,712.42
United States Steel Corporation .....	62,028.12
Bethlehem Steel Corporation .....	36,173.69
The Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co. ....	28,385.39
General Motors Corporation .....	24,626.78
Anthracite Institute .....	17,457.00
Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. ....	16,912.58
San Francisco Employers .....	13,809.12

National Steel Corporation .....	12,085.37
E. J. Hunt Co. ....	12,078.88
Electric Auto-Lite Co. ....	11,351.96
Ohio Insulator Co. ....	10,077.88
B. F. Goodrich Co. ....	7,740.60
Pennsylvania Railroad Co. ....	7,466.25
Chrysler Corporation .....	7,000.00
Thompson Products, Inc. ....	6,867.69
Seattle Chamber of Commerce .....	5,873.03
Water Front Employers Union, San Francisco .....	5,512.16
Columbian Enameling & Stamping Co. ....	5,482.02
Spang Chalfant & Co., Inc. ....	5,281.35
Total .....	<u>\$375,992.29</u>

It should be noted that during the past few years the employers have not used industrial munitions on as large a scale as in the thirties. There are a number of reasons for such restraint. First, during recent strikes the employers' objectives were not for an all-out head-on collision with organized labor. Second, the La Follette Committee exposure still rings in the ears of the Tom Girdlers. Third, the Taft-Hartley law is accomplishing for the employers what tear gas and bullets failed to accomplish. However, the conclusion must not be drawn that industrial munitions are no longer a potentially dangerous anti-strike weapon.

Industrial munitions as a strikebreaking weapon generate a dangerous by-product in the form of salesmen. Munitions vendors have become the modern Pinkertons and *agents provocateurs* who stimulate, promote and organize violence in order that they may reap profits from the sale of munitions. Munitions salesmen have been directed to follow "labor troubles and disputes" and to press sales in anticipation of, or during, strikes.

This has been clearly revealed in the reports and corre-

spondence of these munition vendors. A Lake Erie Chemical Co. salesman for New England in 1935 wrote to the main office: "Wish a hell of a strike would get under way." A few weeks later, he reported on the prospects of a general strike in the textile industry and added: "I hope that this strike develops, and matures, and that it will be a damn bad one, we need the money." A representative of Federal Laboratories, operating in California, in 1934 reported to his main office: "Next month should be a good one. Another strike is expected in the Imperial Valley. Things will be popping." This same salesman sent another report: "Dear Mr. Barker: Good news, I hope. The milk strike is supposed to break today. The strikers presented their demands this morning, and we are standing by to await results. I was in touch with Captain Hastings of the Sheriff's Communist squad, this morning, and he is up in the air as to what will take place. . . . I will let you know as soon as possible the outcome of the milk strike. Here's hoping it is a good one."

In 1935, Lake Erie's St. Louis salesman wrote: "We are surrounded with strikes, but they are all too peaceful to suit me." A similar complaint was registered by another California salesman of Federal Laboratories: "Just a line to let you know that I am still alive and still waiting for a nice juicy strike up here. The darn things don't happen often enough to suit me." Another agent of the same munitions company bitterly complained against President Roosevelt: "I think someone should get out a restraining order on the President of the United States to prevent him from stopping all these strikes. It seems to me that his actions are absolutely in restraint of trade—that is, as far as we are concerned."



The La Follette Committee report revealed how during the 1934 longshore and maritime strike in San Francisco representatives of both Lake Erie and Federal Laboratories were "on the battle front leading and directing squads of police in gassing crowds of strikers. Between them, I. H. McCarty of Lake Erie, and Joseph M. Roush, of Federal Laboratories, delivered between \$20,000 and \$25,000 worth of gas to the San Francisco police. None of this was paid for by the city, all of it coming out of funds of employers and employers associations, directly affected by the strikes." In a report to his home office, Roush described his part: "I then started in with long-range shells and believe me they solved the problem. From then on each riot was a victory for us. During the middle of the day we gathered all available riot guns that I had and long-range shells and proceeded to stop every riot as it started."

Next day—July 5, 1934—became known in San Francisco as "Bloody Thursday" because Roush, the munitions vendor, scored a direct hit. He himself described it in these words: "I might mention that during one of the riots I shot a long-range projectile into a group, a shell hitting one man and causing a fracture of the skull, from which he has since died. As he was a Communist, I have no feeling in the matter and I am sorry that I did not get more." In commenting on the bloodshed in San Francisco, Mr. Young, President of Federal Laboratories, wrote: "I want to especially compliment Baxter, Roush, Baum, Greig, Fisher, Richardson and those boys who have given their personal services to direct the activities of the police in the use of this equipment during times of emergency." Senator La Follette declared that this high praise from the President of Federal Laboratories "for the agent who ex-



pressed regret that he killed only one Communist, amounted to orders 'to shoot to kill.'"

Those who would challenge the idea that a strike is a battle and that there is a similarity between strike strategy and military strategy would do well to reflect on the foregoing facts.

### *How Employers Plan for Industrial Warfare*

Buying munitions is one thing, tactical preparation is another. Employers do not stock up on gas and revolvers and then just sit back and wait for things to develop; often they hire men with military training and background to survey their plants and outline plans for a "tactical situation."

Just to cite one example: On October 21, 1943, Colonel B. C. Goss, who was also President of the Lake Erie Chemical Company, presented a complete "plan of defense" for the Dodge Main Plant, Plymouth Plant, Jefferson-Kercheval Plant, Highland Park Plant and the Dodge Truck Forge Plants.

As the writer sees your problem [wrote Colonel Goss], it may be compared to several divisions, occupying a corps area. Your four plants, Plymouth, Highland, Dodge Truck and Jefferson-Kercheval are within a radius of two to four miles from your Dodge Main Plant, which may be compared to Corps Headquarters, thus making it possible to follow the best military practice for the disposal of chemical troops. On account of the fact that chemical troops require special training and equipment, they are ordinarily of most value if held as a Reserve Force in a central location and sent to a spot where trouble may be occurring. In your case, it is, therefore, recommended that we regard the four outlying plants more or less as Infantry to be equipped with less severe and, therefore, more

simply used chemical weapons. It is further recommended that a Special Chemical Platoon be highly trained and equipped with *more severe* Chemical weapons as a second line of defense.

In view of such clear preparation for armed warfare, strike strategists have no alternative but to learn how to protect strikers from gas attacks and how to utilize cover and concealment from a line of fire. Hence there is need to master some elementary military facts. This is not something labor desires. As has been stated above, this is being forced upon labor by ruthless employers. How far they intend to go may be judged from the instance of the 1935 Goodyear Rubber strike in Akron, Ohio. The company made most extensive military preparations for the approaching strike. It picked several hundred men for special training in the use of rifles, gas, offensive tactics and in how to operate in "wedge formations." To deplore such development is not enough. Labor must know how to protect itself. However little inclination for military knowledge strike leaders may have, they must, when confronted with an employer's military tactics be able to operate without costly mistakes.

Labor leaders must learn, moreover, what to do when troops enter the picture. In view of how repeatedly this has happened in the past and the certainty of its happening again and again in the future, it is unpardonable neglect of duty to sit back and hope that troops will not be called in. There is every expectation that they will. And when they are, they will operate as if strikers were a foreign enemy. The following secret field orders indicate with what care the other side makes military preparations when armed forces enter a big strike situation.

# HEADQUARTERS, YOUNGSTOWN MILITARY DISTRICT

The Armory

Youngstown, Ohio, 4, July 37. 8:00 A.M.

## SECRET

### Field Orders

#### No. 11

Maps: Sohio Road Map 1937; Mahoning County Hiway Map; Youngstown City Map; Trumbull County Hiway Map; Warren City Map; Niles City Map; Cleveland City Map.

1. a. The situation in Mahoning Valley continues quiet. Picketing in Youngstown is practically discontinued. Picketing in Warren has greatly reduced. Pickets at Niles continue to be active. The steel plants in Canton and Massillon are building up their working forces. Picketing in these areas is still heavy. The situation there is quiet. One or more plants in Cleveland will attempt to reopen 6 July 37. The plants in Cleveland are widely scattered. There are several thousand steel workers in Cleveland that are anxious to return to work. The strength of the organized steel workers opposing the reopening of steel plants can be augmented by several thousand workers affiliated with parent labor organization.
- b. The 74th Brigade less units left in Youngstown and Canton Districts moves to Cleveland on 5 July 37.
2. Troops remaining in this area will continue to maintain law and order by intensive patrolling.
3. a. (1) The 74th Brigade less 1st Bn. 166th Inf. (Warren), 3rd Bn. 166th Inf. less Co. M (Canton), and Howitzer and H Companies 166th Inf. will march by truck to Cleveland, Ohio at 8:00 A.M. on 5 July 37 to preserve law and order in the city of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County.
- (2) The Commanding General, 7th Brigade, will report to and secure from Sheriff O'Donnell, Cuyahoga County, Ohio, instructions in writing as to the employment of the military forces in aid to civil forces.
- (3) For time of departure, route, rate of march, etc., see Annex No. 1, March Table attached.

- (4) A reconnaissance party from the 74th Brigade will reconnoiter Cleveland plants and bivouac areas on 4 July 37. Civilian clothes will be worn.
- b. (1) The 1st Bn. 166th Inf. less Companies B and C will maintain law and order in Warren and Niles.
- (2) Sensitive areas and plant entrances will be covered by intensive patrolling. Patrol Schedules will be so arranged that the patrols are at main plant entrances during the changes in working shifts. A machine gun crew with sufficient riflemen to protect gun crew will be maintained at the main entrances of the Republic plants in Warren and Niles.
- (3) Every effort will be made to rest the troops as much as possible in view of their possible use in another area.
- c. (1) Companies B and C 166th Inf. under command of Captain Albert Rankin, Co. C 166th Inf., will move by truck to Buckeye School, Youngstown at 5:00 A.M. on 5 July 37 and take over the policing of plant entrances in Struthers and on Poland Ave. south and east of Market St.
- (2) Sensitive areas and plant entrances will be covered by intensive patrolling. Particular attention being paid to the following entrances:  
 Rod and Wire plants at Struthers  
 Stop 14, Poland Ave.  
 Center St. Viaduct  
 Stop 5, Poland Avenue  
 Tube St. and Poland Ave.
- d. (1) The Howitzer Company, 166th Inf. in District Reserve at Parmalee School, Youngstown, will also cover the plant entrances at Campbell and Hubbard by intensive patrolling, patrols to arrive at plant gates during change in shifts.
- e. (1) The 37th Div. Aviation will furnish planes to the 74th Brigade upon request of the Commanding General, 74th Brigade.
- (2) Planes for observation over Youngstown and Canton District will be requested through this headquarters.
- f. (1) Extreme secrecy will be maintained in regard to the above moves and shifts of troops. Every effort will be



- made to create the impression that large numbers of troops are still available in the Youngstown District.
- (2) Strict march discipline will be enforced on all moves.
  - (3) The decrease in size of Youngstown garrison calls for increased vigilance and attention to duty by remaining troops.
4. a. For administrative details of movements and set-up for remaining troops see Administrative Order No. 7, attached.
  - b. For redistribution of ammunition and special weapons see Annex 2, Ordinance attached.
  - c. Captain Frank Jones, MC, and three men from Medical Detachment 134th F. A. will constitute the medical set-up at Youngstown.
  - d. Regimental Commander, 166th Inf. will leave a medical detachment of one officer and six enlisted men at Warren, Ohio.
  - e. G-4 will arrange for sufficient trucks at Warren, Parmalee and Buckeye Schools and Youngstown Armory to meet any emergency calling for rapid shifting of any or all troops at these locations.
5. a. Communications: See Annex No. 3, Signal attached.
  - b. Command Posts:  
Hq. Military District: Armory, Youngstown, O.  
74th Brigade: Girard, O., till 8:00 A.M. 5 July 37  
Cleveland, O., from 8:00 A.M. 5 July 37  
1st Bn. 166th Inf. Armory, Warren, Ohio  
Companies B and C, 166th Inf.: Buckeye School  
District Reserve: Parmalee School.

By Command of Major General LIGHT:

(Signed) Lee N. Murlin

Colonel, Infantry, Chief of Staff

### *How State and Federal Troops Operate*

Employers are not the only ones who may be responsible for troops in a strike situation. Federal and State authorities have sent troops in time and again. With some

rare exceptions, such a move has been a distinct advantage to the employer.

As a rule, a State or federal military force is ordered to enter a strike area during a crucial moment, such as when a back-to-work movement is started, or when company-instigated violence breaks out. Let us say the Governor orders out the National Guard. These troops are directed "to continue to assist the civil authorities in maintaining law and order." On the surface it seems like an impartial task. In reality, however, the troops, in most cases, play a strikebreaking role.

For example, during the 1937 Steel Strike, Major General G. D. Light, commanding the National Guard in Youngstown, issued an order—General Order No. 3A—that seemingly took no one's part. The order merely said: "Persons desiring to return to work shall be permitted to do so and be protected." But the very next day, General Light and his staff met with the city authorities and representatives of the Steel Corporations behind closed doors to map out the back-to-work movement.

The minutes of that conference are reproduced below. What happened is most revealing. It will serve to eliminate whatever illusions may still exist about the "objectivity" of troops in time of strike.

CONFERENCE AT 10:00 A.M. 25 JUNE 1937  
WITH CIVIL AUTHORITIES AND REPRESENTATIVES OF  
STEEL PLANTS

Present preliminary meeting:

General Gilson D. Light, and members of staff  
General Henderson and staff members  
General Connelly and staff members  
Mayor Roberts of Struthers, Ohio  
Chief of Police Olsen, Youngstown, Ohio

Chief of Police Davis of Struthers, Ohio  
Mayor Evans, Youngstown, Ohio  
Sheriff of Trumbull County, Ohio

General Light explained that we intend to carry out the orders of the Governor to the letter. Situation so far quiet. Thought that Sheet and Tube Co. might open first and, after a day or so, open the Republic plant at Youngstown. After Republic has opened here, then the Republic at Warren and Niles.

The Sheriff said he preferred to see all plants opened at the same time.

NOTE: Take up with steel men whether or not to open all plants without restrictions. Ask what suggestions the steel men have to open these plants.

All previous restrictions are now off. Will allow peaceful picketing within the law. No crowds allowed to collect.

GENERAL LIGHT: "We are working in aid of the civil authorities. We are told by the Sheriff what to do but not how to do it."

Plants will have free passage for men and freight just the same as before the strike. All restrictions of any kind on traffic or plants are off. It is believed that military authorities should tell the steel men to open their plants.

General Light stated that headlines of the *Youngstown Vindicator* were written by military authorities for this morning's edition. Also we have all additional troops and equipment that may be needed, including planes, tanks, etc. Civil authorities told that there is no danger of things not being kept under control.

GENERAL CONNELLY: We have been considered enemies of CIO in Stark County, however situation is well in hand. Believe restrictions should be removed immediately.

Civil authorities advised to be very careful about interviews given to the press so that nothing might be misconstrued.

Crowds of curious bystanders must be dispersed, even though not just at the gates.

10:45 A.M. 25 June 1937

#### STEEL PLANT REPRESENTATIVES ENTERED MEETING

Present (In addition to those at preliminary meetings)

R. M. Welsh, Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co.

W. B. Gillies, Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co.

A. J. Ganthols, Counsel for Republic

Mr. Elliott of Republic Steel

**GENERAL LIGHT:** We ask the wholehearted cooperation of the steel companies. We are acting under the orders of the Sheriff's offices. No restrictions of number of men or freight in or out of these plants, however we do insist on the cooperation of the steel people. Suggest the Sheet & Tube Co. be allowed to open first, the Republic plant next. Suggested that injunction of the Court be followed in Warren and Niles. Steel men said there has been no trouble about men going back to work in Warren and Niles. They all want to go back to work and the only trouble to be expected is some snipers, etc. Believes there is no danger in letting the bars down.

**AGREED BETWEEN ALL THAT ALL BARS BE LET DOWN IN WARREN AND NILES.**

As to Youngstown, the Sheriff believes that there will be some trouble about opening Youngstown plants. Steel men from Sheet & Tube want to start Brier Hill and Campbell. Rod and Wire plants to open after we see how it works out.

Hubbard, Ohio Sheriff and steel men agree that Hubbard plant should wait for a few days before opening.

Steel plants will run two shifts, changing at 7:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M. One gate at Brier Hill and two gates in Campbell to be opened. Additional opening of gates will be agreed upon before opening. Republic Bessemer will not start for a few days. Republic would like to open Stop 5 and Center St. Bridge today.

**AGREED BY ALL THAT STOP FIVE GATE MAY OPEN AT THIS TIME BUT CENTER ST. BRIDGE WILL NOT OPEN.**

City police will be responsible for the protection of cars parked near gates.

**ALL AGREED THAT REPUBLIC WOULD ONLY OPEN STOP 5 THIS AFTERNOON. THREE OPENINGS AT SHEET & TUBE CO. AT BRIER HILL AND 1 AT CAMPBELL. AT 1 STOP 14. STEEL OPERATIONS WILL RUN RIGHT THROUGH THIS SUNDAY.**

Police chief asked for help in patrolling the Center St. Bridge and South Ave. Bridge.

Pickets should be confined to gates and kept moving. Steel plants will run telephone lines from plants to Division and Brigade Headquarters.

Contact men for steel plants: Leventry and Norton of Republic



Co., Smith Mauthe & Davis at Campbell for Sheet & Tube Co.  
Southerland at Brier Hill for Sheet & Tube Co.

The following confidential intelligence report is even more revealing as regards the "impartiality" of the National Guard. Note that the strikers are the "enemy."

HEADQUARTERS, 166th INF.  
Campbell, Ohio

22 June 37—4 P.M.

23 June 37—4 P.M.

24 June 37

S-2 REPORT

1. Picket post maintained by CIO at all points shown on overlay submitted as of 10:30 A.M. June 24.
2. Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co. reports an employment of approximately 13,000 men—CIO claims 90% of employees as members.

Republic Iron & Steel Co. reports employment within our area of about 4,000 men—CIO claims 70% as members.

Total: Y. S. & T. Co. . . . . 11,700

R. I. & S. Co. . . . . 2,800

14,500 men

- a. Enemy morale is excellent and well disciplined, under perfect control of their officers and executives. CIO maintains two bread lines or relief stations in our area.
- b. Reserves consist of 10,000 to 50,000 CIO members in Ohio (northern) and Pennsylvania Coal field.
- c. No changes since last report.
- d. No movement of enemy.
3. Supplies are unknown.
4. Weather—Clear and Warm.
5. Enemy operations—none.
6. a. No arrests made in this section.  
b. CIO have ordered pickets into all positions heretofore occupied.
7. CIO have a limited knowledge of our strength. They place entire military force at 4,500 to 5,000.

8. CIO plan no violence; however there are many radicals who would cause trouble or destruction to start trouble.
9. We have the full friendly cooperation of the Struthers, Campbell and Youngstown police.

Robert E. Boyd  
1st Lt. 166th Inf. S

### *Indoctrinating the National Guard*

The pro-employer bias of the National Guard so clearly expressed in the foregoing conference minutes and intelligence report is not accidental. Nor are the anti-strike activities of this organization due mainly to the anti-labor attitude of commanding officers. The National Guard has been, and is being, oriented and drilled for purposes inimical to the best interests of organized labor. An analysis of its orientation and training manuals indicates that its public pronouncements of impartiality, of serving "all citizens" and "taking no sides" are just a lot of words uttered to mislead and to distract attention from its real purposes.

In 1933 several manuals were issued in Ohio for the guidance of the National Guard in times of "domestic disturbances." The one entitled "National Guard in Aid of Civil Authority," pamphlet No. 1, put out by the Adjutant General's Department, will shatter all illusions as to the supposed impartiality of this group.

In all strike situations where city and county authorities ask for military aid, the Adjutant General, this manual informs us, sends an officer to the scene as an "observer." It is the duty of this "observer" to ascertain detailed information that will, by and large, determine whether or not troops shall be sent. Where does this officer obtain such information? Article 31 gives the answer:

... as the observer works along, provided there is time, he will find it advisable to contact the County Prosecutor, the County Commissioners, possibly the City Council, as well as the Mayors and police in other cities in the county. He will find it most advisable to contact citizens of the community that represent what is called the better and more responsible element. He may do this thru the local Chamber of Commerce; there are also very often other sources and avenues which will lead him more directly to the men he wants.

Note that the observing officer is not instructed to meet with the union leaders, with representatives of the striking workers, or the central labor body in the community. But it is mandatory for him to meet with city and county authorities hostile to the strikers and known to the "observer" as hostile—because these are the very authorities who are asking for troops against the strikers. Further, the "observer" is to meet with the Chamber of Commerce and "the better element" in the city.

Article 58 of the manual states that peaceful picketing "seems to have some legal status," but "it is hard to determine when and where it can be 'peaceful' if hoots and jeers, and threats of violence, are part and parcel of it. What will be allowed of the pickets had better be thoroughly understood at the very beginning, and the restrictions be sharply drawn. At the first break-over of these restrictions the privilege should be denied."

Article 59 provides that scabs and those enlisting in back-to-work movements shall be armed:

The question of the carrying of guns by men seeking work, or working under the protection of the Sheriff or the troops, will come up, and either the observer or the Commander of Troops will be approached in the matter. Refer all such cases to the Sheriff and the presiding judge in the Common Pleas Court. Frequently, and especially where the individual has been attacked or threatened such permission will be given.

Article 61 stresses "neutrality" but at the same time

clearly establishes the real position of the National Guard toward back-to-work movements:

While we must at all times use every endeavor to maintain complete neutrality, once things get to going it becomes very difficult. . . . The doctrine that men who are willing to work under the conditions and the wages offered have a right to work and they must be protected in that right has never been so clearly and courageously enunciated and maintained as it has been during the year 1932. The stand taken marks a milestone in the long history of our industrial disputes and seems to be a long step forward. . . .

Article 64 reveals how vicious is the training of the National Guard and that this training is primarily for use against strikers. Public opinion seems to be the only restraining influence. Once public opinion has been properly molded, the troops are to do their job "neatly and quickly."

While it may be hard for us to agree that a passive defensive attitude is necessary or advisable, when once conditions require the calling of troops; we are well aware of the fact that the larger general conditions affecting the whole policy of the State's Executive require that public opinion be behind him before he can permit really drastic steps to be taken. Public opinion is slow to form as a rule and it requires State-wide knowledge of the conditions to agree in support of the employment of force particularly in our industrial disputes. The cry of "cossacks" which is sure to be raised by certain groups is practically sure to be taken up by some of the newspapers, and a great deal of embarrassment result. Good strategy therefore demands a cautious policy steadily carried out in the face of growing violence until public opinion is so aroused over the wanton acts of the lawless that the offensive can be taken and pushed with vigor. Officers and men will therefore, very often, have to grit their teeth and suffer humiliation of spirit until the time comes when they can be released to do their job neatly and quickly as the means given them and the size of the problem will permit.

What is meant by a quick and neat job is outlined in Section 73:

There are one or two methods of dispersing or cowing the groups



of disturbers which have proven quite successful and which do not involve bloodshed.

(a) The first and most useful of these is gas. The Guard now has a chemical warfare section and it is intended that some of these men shall be sent out with each body of troops. These men are armed with a gas gun and grenades. The guns are used to throw the gas far into the crowd: effort being made to reach the leader groups, which will not be found in the front ranks. The grenades may be used by the officers or selected enlisted men; but they should be equipped with masks as it is possible to scoop the grenades up and toss them back. The men equipped with masks should be pushed well forward and covered by the arms of others. Care must be exercised as to the direction of the wind and the presence of eddies which may carry the gas to points other than desired.

(b) The second is the use of camera. The disturbers just don't like to have their pictures taken and will duck if an effort is made to photograph them.

(c) The third consists of the sending of fast-moving patrols to threaten the flanks and rear of the crowds and to all intent preparing to pocket them. The patrols should be instructed not to expose themselves in the line of fire either the main body or other flanking patrols. Even if it is intended to make arrests, at least one avenue of escape should always be left for the mob to use.

(d) A fourth method, applicable largely to a more prolonged disturbance covering a considerable area, consists in the employment of active harassing patrols, the making of arrests and examining at troop headquarters of individuals suspected of hostile activity. Once in a while you will get the right man; but main object is to give the leaders and active partisans the idea they are being watched. Avoid giving those arrested newspaper publicity if at all possible.

Keep records of all car license numbers known or suspected of use by disturbers and ascertain to whom the licenses were issued. If a certain car shows up on record two or three times, have the operators and owner brought in and warn them.

Such is the "neutrality" of the National Guard. In applying the principles of military strategy to strike strategy, union leaders will do well to keep this "neutrality" in mind and not permit themselves to be surprised.

*P A R T      T W O*



## Preparing for Battle

THE watchword of every union should be alertness. A union may at no time regard its contract with management as a guarantee of lasting peace; for American labor history is crowded with lockouts and other forms of attack against unions even when contracts were in existence. In the early twenties, when the employers embarked upon their notorious "open shop" offensive, hundreds of union contracts were declared null and void by simply posting a notice on the bulletin board or through a letter to the workers. More recently, a number of employers refused to renew contracts on the grounds that these unions had adopted a policy of "non-compliance" with the Taft-Hartley Act.

It is much safer to view a collective bargaining agreement as a respite, as assurance of a period during which forces may be gathered for the battles to come. Such an



approach guarantees that the gains made and the positions won will be secure and that the union will not be caught napping in case of unforeseen emergencies. This certainly has not been the case in the past. The death of President Roosevelt in 1945, the Republican victory in November 1946, the enactment of the Taft-Hartley law in 1947 presented organized labor with many difficult problems, and most unions were not fully prepared to meet them. The errors of the past should not be repeated. If Taft-Hartleyism persists for any length of time, organized labor will once again be confronted with a new employer-sponsored "open shop" drive. If the political situation changes, labor may find itself facing many unforeseen emergencies. The unions may be called upon to wage a strike at any time. And the time to prepare for a strike is not when negotiations have broken down but when the union has a contract and the possibility of strife does not appear to be immediate.

Careful preparation for a strike is exceedingly important—very often the conduct and the outcome of a strike depend on the quality of the preparatory work. Two outstanding American labor leaders, whose points of view have been extreme opposites, agree in stressing the matter of preparation. Describing how they got ready for a cigar makers' strike, Samuel Gompers in his *Seventy Years of Life and Labor* said: "We put into our plans for conducting a strike as much hard thinking as any military strategist ever gave a campaign." William Z. Foster, on the basis of his experience in the steel strike, declared: "Fundamental to the carrying out of a good strike strategy is a thorough preliminary organization for the struggle. This is the equivalent to the recruiting and training of any army

before the battle. . . . Good preparation gives the workers incomparable greater striking power. It is on the same principle that drilled troops are better fighters than new recruits.”(William Z. Foster, *What Means a Strike in Steel*.)

### *Preparing the Newly Organized to Strike*

Strike preparations must necessarily vary. What they are depends on the character of the expected struggle. If the strike is to take place in a factory or industry where hitherto collective bargaining was not in effect, the major task is to bring the workers into the union. This means to develop the organizing campaign to a peak. In such an intensified recruiting and union building drive, care must be taken that the key plants and departments receive special attention.

Another important step in strike preparations in an unorganized, as well as organized, field must be to popularize the economic demands of the workers. As a rule, unorganized or newly organized workers have no appreciation of the value of organization and solidarity. Their chief concern is whether or not they will derive immediate material benefits by joining the union, or by going out on strike. Hence the necessity of popularizing the immediate gains. Many old-time labor leaders failed in their organization drives on account of their lifeless and abstract slogans. The CIO unions in their formative stages applied the principle of stressing immediate gains and this became a powerful weapon in mobilizing the workers for the approaching struggles. In preparation for the great Ford strike that ended in recognition of the United Auto

Workers, the demand for an increase of 10 cents an hour to bring the wage rates of Ford workers up to the standards of General Motors and Chrysler workers was the strongest appeal the union could have made. At the same time this demand exposed the well advertised myth that "Ford pays the highest wages." Every possible avenue must be used to popularize the economic needs and demands.

### *Reaching the Workers and Their Families*

How about strike preparations in industries where the workers are already substantially organized and the unions well established?

There the first task is mobilization of the membership for response to a strike call. This means getting across to the workers three things: first, that the demands presented to the employers are just and wise; second, that these demands can be obtained only through a strike; third, that if the strike is called, they must *actively* participate and stick it out till the very end. To take it for granted that workers will automatically respond to a strike call is a mistake. It is not enough to call a membership meeting and decide by a majority vote on strike action. In most unions attendance at membership meetings is entirely unsatisfactory. Local unions with a membership of several thousand have an average attendance of only several hundred. This means that a majority, or at least a substantial minority, of the workers soon to be involved in a strike struggle remain passive. This is a danger spot and may have a bearing on the strike and its outcome.

Clearly, the union and its leaders must take special steps



to reach the passive section of the membership before the strike breaks out. This can be accomplished through the union newspaper and through special bulletins and letters explaining the issues involved. In this connection the shop or department steward, the organizer, or the business agent must be assigned to reach the passive members either in the shops or at home.

Next in importance is to reach the worker's family. A strike upsets the entire normal life of a family. It not only cuts off the income, but it brings tension and anxiety. At the end of the week, Mrs. Striker gets no pay envelope. She cannot pay the bills and do other things that she normally does. She is also subjected to an anti-strike barrage in the local newspaper. And she is worried that something may happen to her husband while on strike duty.

Entirely too often strike leaders neglect the striker's family while the employer, on the other hand, often recognizes the value of concentrating on Mrs. Striker. As a part of strike preparations the following is the least the union can do:

1. Ask the union members to arrange a "family conference" and explain to the rest of the family why a strike is necessary. Urge patience on the wife and children and make them proud of the fact that Dad is fighting for their rights.

2. Address a special letter to the wives explaining why a strike is unavoidable and urging their support.

3. Call a special meeting of the wives and children and have a union leader and some of the more union-conscious wives, who understand the aims and purposes of the strike, address them.



4. Organize a special committee to visit the families that are confused about the issues involved in the strike.

### *Going to the People*

The importance of winning the support of the strikers' families can hardly be overestimated, but the general public must not be neglected either. Every effort should be made to win public opinion to the side of the strikers. The average American genuinely believes in fair play and sportsmanship, yet the average American is at the same time very gullible. Employers and their highly skilled public relations agencies have often succeeded in misleading entire communities about the rights and wrongs of a strike battle.

To counteract employer propaganda and win public opinion to its side, the union must first of all recognize that the game is not played fairly, that bribery, subterfuge, corruption and secret deals are all weapons employed against labor.

In the late thirties when the CIO and AFL unions were engaged in great organizing campaigns, the employers perfected a whole series of devices to mislead the workers as well as public opinion in general. A leading role in this anti-labor campaign was played by the MacDonald-Cook Co. of South Bend, Indiana. This public relations crew, hired by steel and other powerful corporations to plan the campaign to mislead the public, hit on a shrewd idea which they termed the "Harmony Campaign." In each industrial community where the unions were engaged in organizing campaigns the "Harmony Campaign" was instituted. It consisted of 13 full-page cleverly worded ad-

vertisements prepared by the MacDonald-Cook Co. and printed at regular intervals in the local newspapers. These ads were so written as to first create the impression of impartiality and even a sympathetic attitude toward the employees and then gradually worked up to an attack against unions.

The game would have been fair had these ads appeared in the name of the steel or other corporations which helped to formulate them and paid for them, or had they appeared in the name of the public relations firm. Instead, the names of prominent citizens of the community were attached to them, the signers often not knowing that the ads were company inspired, company subsidized, and company edited. Nor did they know that these same ads appeared in other cities with another set of local signatures.

This example of unfair play has been elaborated here so as to bring home to the union preparing for a strike that it must have no illusions about the impartiality of most newspapers. Too often local newspapers and radio stations in industrial centers work hand in glove with the employers.

To win public opinion to the side of labor the union must work out a detailed plan of action. The following should be done:

1. Union leaders should confer with editors of local newspapers, present the union's point of view, and ask that the paper avoid displaying a hostile attitude toward the thousands of citizens who may be forced to go on strike. Should the paper, while claiming to be neutral, depart from a neutral position, the union should lose no time in exposing the hypocrisy.

2. Where the union knows that little can be expected from the local newspaper, the union must be prepared to present its position in paid advertisements.

3. In preparation for the strike, the union must purchase radio time. The broadcasts must explain that the union has tried to prevent a strike and that in the event a strike occurs the responsibility will be the company's. The broadcasts must also emphasize the mutual benefits to the strikers and the community if the union's demands are met by the employers. Such broadcasts must be of a popular nature.

4. In the event that space in the newspapers or radio time is not available, the union must print a message to the community. Such a message should be printed as a leaflet and be distributed by the thousands throughout the town or city.

5. A committee of distinguished veterans should be appointed to present labor's case to the leaders of the local veterans' organizations and to urge their support.

6. Similar committees should meet with the Mayor, City Councilman, church leaders, civic organization leaders, heads of political parties, and other influential personalities in the community.

All this must be done as part of the strike preparations. The problem of molding public opinion in support of the strike must not be left until after the strike begins.

In addition to the preparatory tasks outlined above, the union must not neglect a number of others. If there are CIO and AFL locals in the plant or industry, every effort should be made to bring about united action. Dramatic actions that capture the imagination are another pre-strike essential; great mass meetings, parades and radio pro-

grams help to develop a strike spirit. Nor can the practical organizational tasks be left to the eleventh hour. Picketing, publicity, finances, legal aid and a multitude of other things must be planned in advance.

### *Involving the Rank and File*

The difference between an army and a mob is that an army is a well organized and disciplined body governed by rules and regulations and led by its own chain of command. No army of strikers can possibly achieve such a high degree of organization. However, if a strike is not to assume the character of a formless mob, it must have its own form of organization and a chain of command corresponding to the needs of the particular strike. This we shall refer to as strike machinery.

The strike organization must have a wide democratic base; that is, a large section of strikers must be involved in the various phases of activity. A strike needs active participants, not observers. Union officers or strike leaders who do not understand, or who minimize, the need for active participation of the workers involved in the strike may well blame themselves should a section of the strikers fall prey to company propaganda and join a back-to-work movement or some other company sponsored move.

Union officers must at all times remember that a strike temporarily transforms the mode of life of those involved. Their daily routine changes suddenly. A striker has a lot of free time. From a worker who had to produce every minute of the day, he suddenly discovers he has many free hours and often nothing to do but spend time in a nearby bar, movie or union hall. The strike machinery



must be so planned as to utilize those free hours for the good of the strike.

There is a yet more important angle to this problem. While workers on strike are usually idle, management is not. From the corporation President to the department foreman management is busily engaged in anti-strike activities. One of these is to carefully observe the degree of participation of the rank and file. When management comes to the conclusion that the workers are passive, show lack of interest, and merely "sweat it out," it is greatly encouraged to initiate back-to-work movements and other steps based on the notion that the workers are not solidly behind the union. By the same token, active participation on the part of the strikers has just the opposite effect on management. When the employer sees his workers taking an active part in the strike and that among them are the key people in each department, without whom the plant cannot run, he becomes aware of the strength of the strike. Also, when the workers actively participate in the strike and management observes it, the strikers commit themselves to the union and realize that from then on their future depends almost entirely on the victorious outcome of the battle.

Aside from these considerations, active participation of the workers is essential because a strike is an operative action and requires lots of manpower to handle the thousand and one problems arising daily. Not to have such manpower, or to be unable to utilize it, can have disastrous consequences.

Because in recent years scabbing has become very unpopular some strike leaders have concluded that there is no need for active rank and file participation. In fact,

strikers are often told to stay home. Some unions have even adopted the policy of calling off local membership meetings during the strike. Such passivity is distinctly detrimental to the strike. Troops in a wartime army are in constant training till the very moment they are declared in "tactical position." The same should be true of strikers. An army of strikers that is dispersed, inactive, deployed, cannot possibly react to unforeseen emergencies and sudden turns of events. Dispersion weakens morale and destroys the spirit of solidarity so vitally necessary in time of strike.

### *Organizing the Strike Leadership*

The strike machinery itself depends on the scope of the strike—whether it is industry-wide, regional or local. Furthermore, strike machinery must correspond to the needs and peculiarities of each industry. A miners' strike is limited to the various mining communities. A national railroad strike spreads all over the country. A maritime strike could spread over many parts of the world. Clearly, strike machinery in these three industries will, of necessity, vary. Yet there are certain guiding principles applicable to most strike conditions, particularly as they apply to lower levels, i.e., the strike in each community.

If the strike is on an industry-wide basis, or against a company with plants in several States, the top leadership of the union must assume the role of high command. It is provided in a large number of union constitutions that such strikes must be sanctioned by the national officers or the general executive board. Often the international officers come forward as leaders of such strikes. It is gen-

erally good policy when an industry-wide strike is contemplated that a number of top leaders be assigned to key spots to assist the regional or district leadership of the union.

This alone, however, is insufficient. Strike leadership should be much broader than the regular union leadership; for the greater the participation of the rank and file, the stronger the strike. In recent years this has been better understood, and the principle has been applied, although still inadequately. For example, the auto workers, the electrical and radio workers, the steel workers and the coal miners set up industry-wide or company-wide negotiating committees, or policy committees, or scale committees consisting of representatives from each local union. However, in a number of unions such committees are a mere formality, the real negotiating and policy making remaining in the hands of a few top officers. This is unfortunate. Such committees deserve real recognition and should be given more authority. The committeemen, coming as they do from various sections of the industry, are in closest contact with the workers and are fully aware of the needs, desires and sentiments of the rank and file. Trade union and strike leaders who have experienced genuine union democracy know that the rank and file have a great deal to teach them. It has happened many times during tense negotiations that rank and file leaders, fresh from the mills and factories, have made more of an impression on the employer representatives than the full-time union officers.

The participation of the rank and file in the strike leadership is of tremendous value from another point of view. It often happens during strikes that anti-labor newspapers and radio commentators concentrate their attacks against



the top leaders of a strike. They do this not only to make the public antagonistic toward the leaders but also to weaken their prestige within the ranks of the strikers. The voice of a rank and file leader in support of the union and its policies has often proved to be the best way of counteracting the anti-strike propaganda.

Utmost care must be taken that no company agent penetrates into a high position of strike leadership. This could be as damaging to a strike as an enemy spy in the ranks of an army high command in time of war.

For all these reasons it is highly desirable that as part of the strike preparations there be set up an authoritative leading strike committee that will include a representative group of rank and file workers. No strike committee, of course, could be considered genuinely representative unless it included adequate representation of Negro workers on strike.

### *Setting Up Essential Strike Committees*

What strike machinery is needed in the various strike-bound communities? There has to be, of course, a local strike committee to take charge of the strike. This will be the most authoritative committee of all. Next in importance is a well functioning picketing committee.

The problem of picketing is so important that it will be dealt with at length in a separate chapter. Here it will be sufficient to say that a picket line can be compared to that regiment in an army which occupies a line in the most forward area of a front. For such troops the army selects its best trained line officers. Similarly, the men in charge of the picket line must be the ablest, most devoted and



most courageous strikers. In each union there are veterans. Among them there are distinguished commissioned and non-commissioned officers who have learned to handle men in difficult times. If these strikers have a basic union loyalty, they will constitute a base for a fine picket committee.

Of great importance in any strike is a well functioning publicity committee. An able publicity committee, alert enough to put out strike bulletins, press releases, letters to editors, effective paid advertisements, special handbills to the strikers and the public, and good radio scripts can go a long way in building a high morale among the strikers and cultivating public sympathy. In most cases the anti-union prejudices of the local newspaper and the radio station are one of the greatest advantages an employer has. Such newspapers and radio stations can have a very demoralizing effect on the strikers and can alienate public support. It is wrong for strike leadership to reconcile itself to such an unfavorable position. Experience has shown that it is possible to reverse or at least neutralize such a condition. In recent years many unions have established their own publicity departments with highly trained newspaper people in charge. But this is generally the case only at the higher levels of union organization and such publicity departments take the place of local publicity committees. The two should supplement each other.

Of equal importance is a strike relief committee. The tasks and duties of this committee will again vary with the strike. Old established unions with substantial treasuries pay regular strike benefits that cover the most urgent needs of strikers and their families. But such unions are few in number. In most cases relief for strikers has to be

obtained through the collection of money, food, clothing, and the establishment of regular canteens and kitchens. This is a vital task but also a tremendous undertaking. Often committees of strikers must be sent to nearby farming communities to collect food. Other strikers must visit local unions to solicit funds, and still others must visit the local merchants. Another very important phase of a relief committee's responsibility is to assist strikers in taking advantage of local relief agencies, obtaining unemployment insurance, stopping evictions, processing relief and other applications at strike headquarters, etc.

Since World War II something new has been added to strike machinery—a veterans' committee. In a great many ways such a committee can be of tremendous value to the strike. To begin with, if the assumption that there are many similarities between military and strike strategy is correct, then obviously strikers with a rudimentary knowledge of military strategy can play an important role in any strike. Because of their training and experience veterans can become the spark plugs on the picket line, maintaining and giving examples of discipline. They can also lead the defense of strikers in time of attack from company-sponsored sources. Striking veterans can also become the bridge between the union and local veterans' organizations, whose leadership may be hostile to the strike. Striking veterans' contingents, under the leadership of an able veterans' committee, can become the most important detachments of the strike.

"Citizens' Committees," whether in support of or against a strike, do not spring up spontaneously. Experience, particularly in industrial centers, indicates that an actively sympathetic Citizens' Committee can be called into being

by the strikers; for there are strong bonds between the mill hand and the merchant on Main Street. A steel town like Youngstown, an auto town like Flint, or a textile center like New Bedford depends almost entirely, economically and politically, on the workers living in those communities. The greater the buying power of these workers, the more prosperous the community. A successful termination of a strike is thus in the interests of the entire community. The merchants, the professionals, the clergy and leaders of civic organizations need to be awakened to this undeniable fact. A Citizens' Committee sponsored or stimulated by the union becomes an important part of strike machinery.

A good entertainment committee, whose duty is to take care of some of the social needs of the strikers, can go a long way in maintaining high morale and can lend life to a strike. Especially is this true where a large number of the strikers are young. Free dances, free movies, sports activities, and lectures on interesting topics cement friendships among the strikers and foster solidarity. The professional entertainment world is very well organized. Many a Hollywood and Broadway star carries a union book, and is sympathetic to groups of workers on strike. Some of these prominent personalities could be induced to visit strike centers, and their visits would become important events in the life of the strike. An entertainment committee could even venture to organize amateur dramatic groups; plenty of talent can be found in the ranks of the strikers. An entertainment or social committee that is truly enterprising can become as essential a part of the strike machinery as a relief committee.

Among the really important committees often neglected by strike leaders is an investigating committee. This com-



mittee could be compared to the intelligence unit of an army. In time of strike wild rumors spread; company "missionaries" spread defeatism; strangers visit picket lines and urge violence; individual strikers are suspected of being in contact with management; somebody is sure scabs are arriving. All this has to be investigated. Or the picket committee reports that a number of strikers have absented themselves over a period of time. Where are those pickets, what are they doing? All the time the company is making moves, some real, others as a decoy. Such developments must be looked into carefully; for every bit of information has meaning for those in charge of the strike. It is, of course, not advisable to make public who the members of the investigating committee are. Their work would be hampered and the quality of what they did greatly reduced.

The committees outlined above are the principal parts of strike machinery. But other essential committees are needed. A women's committee to develop activities and sustain high morale among the wives of strikers by involving the women in canteen work, picket duty and collection of food can be very effective. Then strike leaders might consider setting up a special trial board to try those who violate strike discipline, as was done during the West Coast maritime strike with good results. A city-wide trade union committee in support of the strike can also become a valuable part of strike machinery.

### *An Example of Strike Efficiency*

The victorious 1936 maritime strike in San Francisco, led by Harry Bridges, offers a fine example of efficient strike machinery. While the strike was still on, the Joint



Marine Strike Committee drew up an outline of the organizational machinery in San Francisco in order to give strike leaders in other ports a picture of how the strike was being handled. A great deal can be learned about strike machinery from the excerpt quoted below:

The organization which has complete charge of the strike is the San Francisco Bay Area District Council No. 2 of the Maritime Federation, acting as the San Francisco Joint Marine Strike Committee. Each organization is permitted to seat five representatives on the Strike Committee, an increase of two delegates in the representation provided for in the District Council Constitution.

The function of the Joint Strike Committee is to lay down the local policy for the conduct of the strike and supervise the work of the various top committees. The most important committees which are under the direction of the Strike Committee, are:

- (1) Central Relief Committee
- (2) Central Defense Committee
- (3) Central Picketing Committee
- (4) Joint Publicity Committee
- (5) Ways and Means Committee
- (6) Maritime Federation Patrol

The Central Relief Committee: Is composed of three delegates from each organization. Approximately 70 members attend the meetings. This committee has its own chairman, secretary, board of trustees, purchasing agent and bookkeeper. Two representatives are seated on the Joint Strike Committee. The relief committee has established a kitchen at 84 Embarcadero, with a seating capacity of approximately 350. Approximately 15,000 meals a day are now being served by the kitchen. In addition, the relief committee and the Ladies Auxiliary No. 3 are caring for approximately 100 strikers' families. Facilities are also provided for housing single men.

Serving and preparing and maintenance of the relief kitchen are in charge of the Marine Cooks and Stewards—which is open approximately 24 hours a day and employs about 200 men.

The Central Defense Committee consists of two men from each organization. This committee maintains an office which is open 24 hours a day and has contacts with lawyers and bail bond brokers and can furnish an attorney and bail broker for any striker who may be arrested, on a moment's notice. This committee has pre-

pared and printed 25,000 instruction cards and distributed them to pickets. The Defense Committee also has two delegates seated on the Joint Strike Committee.

The Central Picketing Committee, which is composed of five representatives of the Joint Strike Committee, has complete authority to issue passes which will permit individuals or material to go through picket lines. This is one of the busiest and most important committees. Its functions include passes to release perishable goods in cold storage warehouses, to permit passengers' baggage and mail and so forth to be loaded and discharged from foreign ships and to release orders for city, county, state or government institutions and vessels. Organizations and pickets are instructed to recognize only this pass. This system centralizes all passes and permits a close check to be kept on who is going through picket lines. Passes are printed in several colors and every few days the committee cancels all outstanding passes and requires holders to obtain new ones.

The Joint Publicity Committee consists of one member from each organization. Two delegates from this committee are seated on the Joint Strike Committee. This committee has charge of arranging mass meetings, sending speakers to outside organizations, preparing leaflets and pamphlets and writing press releases to newspapers, etc.

The Ways and Means Committee consists of five delegates from the Joint Strike Committee. The duties of this group are to coordinate the activities of all sub-committees and to keep a careful check as to the money collected and handled by the Joint Strike Committee.

All committees are required to submit vouchers in duplicate for all expenditures made. These vouchers must be approved by the Ways and Means Committee before checks are issued in payment. The Ways and Means Committee also pro-rates the cost of the activities of the various committees among the affiliated organizations, keeps the books of the council, plans ways and means of financing the various enterprises, keeps a close check on all debts outstanding and money collections and assists the secretary in transacting the business of the Joint Strike Committee.

*Maritime Federation Patrol:* The Maritime Federation Patrol consists of 64 men. Approximately 6 from each major striking organization. This patrol is divided into four groups of sixteen men each. There are two captains each in charge of two watches and two

sergeants on each watch. The patrol works under the direction of the Secretary of the Joint Strike Committee. Members of the Patrol wear a blue armband which bears the letters M. F. P. in white. The duties of the patrol are to keep drunks off the waterfront, to prevent disturbances and report instances of interest to the unions. Several members of the group act as investigators to check up on information relative to the recruiting of scabs, etc. The Patrol has been very successful. There are more than 15,000 men registered for picket duty in San Francisco, since the strike began two weeks ago, and has experienced no disturbance of any kind on the picket line.

A strike leader reading this chapter might say: "These are all very good ideas, but we don't have the people to do it with." This is a wrong approach. Just as in military battles men quiet, modest and untried come forward and become heroes, so workers in time of strike come forward and become leaders. In each local union, in each plant, are hundreds of devoted and intelligent union men and women. They are the shop stewards, board members and numerous other active workers. They, in turn, have hundreds of friends working alongside them. Many of these workers have a great deal of native ability, and a wise strike leader knows how to bring this to the surface and make it operate for the good of the union. All that is needed to turn such workers into leaders is confidence in them, plus training, direction, guidance and strict supervision.

Solid strike machinery is possible for every union. But it cannot be built in a day or a week or a month. Strike leaders who want to create an effective organization cannot wait until the strike is actually on. Nor, on the other hand, can they perfect the strike machinery before the strike begins. What is needed is a plan, a skeleton organization to build on as the strike goes along.

A strike without solid strike machinery, without a chain



of command, without distribution of work and responsibility is exposed to grave dangers that might be fatal; whereas a well-organized and democratically led strike can withstand blows and setbacks and still emerge victorious.

### *Does a Depression Rule Out Strikes?*

It has already been mentioned that the practice of scabbing has been very much discredited in recent years. While this is generally true, strike leaders would be making a serious mistake if they drew the conclusion that under no circumstances can scabbing again become a serious threat to strikes. The past decade is not a criterion. It should be remembered that there is a close relation between scabbing and unemployment and that neither before, during, nor after World War II was there mass unemployment in this country. Such favorable economic circumstances cannot last forever; cyclical crises, depressions and "recessions" are inherent in our economic system. Even as this is being written, unemployment continues to rise, and the fear of its spread has already affected labor's tactics, particularly as they relate to strikes.

Should labor in time of depression shelve its grievances or strike to obtain its objectives? Which is the correct strategy?

It has been long held by many in the labor movement that during periods of depression unions must avoid strikes under all circumstances, the chief reason being the great army of unemployed and the consequent danger of scabbing. Now there may have been some justification for such a theory in the past when the percentage of organized workers was altogether insignificant and in our basic



and mass production industries practically nonexistent. With no contractual relations and with no floor on base rates, the unemployed, under pressure of economic misery, were forced to compete against established higher rates of pay and during strikes often replaced those who were on the picket lines. But at present, because of the strength and prestige of organized labor, the problem of strikes in relation to depressions and unemployment can be viewed in an entirely new manner.

Unions and their leaders must discard old concepts that add up to the theory that during periods of unemployment it is impossible to carry through effective strike movements. Such a policy spells defeat without struggle. It invites the employers to take the offensive in the form of wage cuts, and the very existence of the unions is endangered. The truth is that precisely during difficult economic periods labor's militancy and determination must reach their highest peak. In time of battle when an army is confronted with possible reverses, its commanders do not think in terms of an all-out retreat but rather how to develop a counteroffensive. Organized labor can develop a policy and a line of action that will reduce the dangers of unemployment to a minimum. It is within the power of labor to move forward in full-scale economic and legislative offensives against depressions and unemployment.

### *Tackling the Unemployment Problem*

Working out ways and means to deal effectively with unemployment is part of strike preparation. Any leader who adopts an attitude that a union deals only with problems of workers who are employed is short-sighted. His attitude is bound to damage both the employed and the

unemployed in the industry. Should the thousands or tens of thousands of unemployed in a given industry develop a feeling that their union is not concerned with their plight and does not put up a fight for their immediate needs, they will look upon the union as a "fair weather friend" and may turn against organized labor.

Instead of playing on the fear of strikebreaking by the unemployed, instead of using this as an excuse for making basic and costly concessions to employers, union leaders would serve their union best by devoting time, energy, and resources to working out a detailed plan that will meet the problem of unemployment in the industry or community. The following could constitute a basis for such a program:

1. Individual unions and organized labor as a whole should initiate a movement for the 30 hour week. With the rapid growth of our capacity to produce, the battle for a shorter work week assumes paramount importance. By labor's taking the lead on this issue, the unemployed will recognize that their own future is bound up with that of organized labor.

2. In shaping up demands for a possible strike, union leaders must include demands the winning of which will result in immediate benefits for the unemployed. In addition to a shorter work week, there should be a demand for a strong clause in the contract that will provide for the application of strict seniority to layoffs and rehiring. A demand for severance pay for all laid-off workers should also be included.

3. The unions should also take the lead in fighting for increased unemployment insurance and other benefits to be provided by the State and federal governments.

4. Labor should initiate broad public works programs

such as housing, highways, hospitals, schools, and similar projects that would absorb thousands of unemployed, to be paid at prevailing union rates. Government-financed public works projects were the most popular single piece of legislation sponsored by the early New Deal.

5. Each union must set up its own unemployment department to help the unemployed members to speedily obtain unemployment insurance. The union should give the unemployed legal assistance when they are faced with evictions. When the unemployed are confronted with emergencies, the union should contact welfare agencies and render other assistance, standing by the unemployed as a friend in need.

6. International, as well as local, unions should take steps to eliminate a condition where members, because they are unemployed, lose certain union rights or benefits. A system of special reduced dues rates for unemployed would go a long way toward solving this question.

7. The union should establish the closest relationship with unemployed organizations in the community, giving them all-out assistance in their daily struggles to alleviate their plight.

8. Last, but not least, every union should face courageously and in a progressive manner the problems of the unemployed Negro workers and make them problems of the union as a whole. Since the war ended, unemployment has hit the Negro workers hardest. Because they were among the last hired, the Negroes are the first fired. Whereas seniority is to the white worker a source of security, to the Negro worker it is often the opposite. Often the "seniority" of the white worker is used as a pretext and justification for not putting up a struggle for the rights of Negro workers to remain in industry. The un-



employed Negro workers in the industry and community should feel that they have a stake in a winning strike. This means that the union leaders and the white workers must be prepared to make tangible concessions and to offer the Negro workers not just "sympathy" but jobs, promotions to better jobs, and other guarantees in return for all-out support to a strike. It should no longer be one-way traffic.

### *Achieving United Ranks*

No strike strategy is really sound unless its foundation is united and solid ranks. There is no reference here to artificial unity; the unity meant here is a conscious and well-cemented unity that will keep the ranks together come hell or high water. It is a unity based upon the highest interests of the workers. To achieve such unity and solidarity, sincere efforts must be made in several directions.

First and foremost, a high degree of conscious unity must be developed between Negro and white workers. Such unity can never be realized while many trade union leaders are themselves proponents of the vicious anti-labor Jim Crow system. No union has a right to expect that Negro workers will join in an all-out battle when that same union, in one form or another, is guilty of discrimination.

In the past, conservative trade union leaders have attempted to justify their own prejudices on the grounds that the Negro workers are "unorganizable," that they are "scab-minded," and that their leaders are "anti-union." Nothing demonstrated more clearly how false these "theories" are than the first and most progressive decade



of the CIO. At its very first convention, the CIO laid the foundation for unity of Negro and white workers. In a special resolution it declared that the CIO pledged itself "to uncompromising opposition to any form of discrimination, whether political or economic, based upon race, color, creed or nationality." The progressive forces within the CIO gave such pronouncements real content and meaning during the period of the great organizing campaigns.

Not only the Negro workers, but the Negro people as a whole and their great organizations enthusiastically responded to the clarion call for organization. The steel, automobile and other basic and mass production industries today would not be as solidly organized without the great contributions of the Negro workers. In recent major strike struggles in the steel, automobile, and packing house industries, the Negro workers came forward as being among the best strikers, making the greatest sacrifice, even though many of their basic economic problems have not been resolved by these and other unions.

It is childish to think that real Negro and white unity can be achieved on the eve of a strike. To the degree that a union in its daily struggles champions the Negro workers, fighting for their rights to be promoted to better jobs, not to be among the first fired, to be given adequate representation on all levels of leadership, to be able to play a leading role in the political struggles for Negro rights, to that degree will genuine Negro and white unity exist in time of strike.

The American labor movement is divided between AFL and CIO and between right and left. This cannot but affect strike movements. Many examples could be cited from the recent past to show the harm these divisions have

done. There are labor leaders who have stooped so low as to use some provisions of the hated Taft-Hartley law against workers and unions conducting strikes.

Notwithstanding these sharp differences, there is a deep-rooted solidarity within the ranks of labor. Often this solidarity is so strong that it sweeps aside edicts from the top, or forces union leaders to yield to the mood of the membership. The general strikes that have occurred in the past represented the highest expression of labor unity and solidarity in time of a major battle.

This aspect of unity will be dealt with in a later chapter. Here we are concerned with unity within the ranks of the workers about to strike: trade union democracy, the autonomous rights of internationals and such rights of local unions within internationals, are the basic prerequisites for unity within the ranks in time of strike. Put in another way, this means that in unions where sharp differences exist genuine efforts must be made to reach unity on the basis of a united front of all forces for the purpose of winning the strike. To guarantee that such a unity program will be carried out, each group and tendency must get representation on all the leading bodies that determine the course and conduct of the strike.

It has been emphasized that such unity must be based on a common objective—winning the strike. Unity “at all cost” could be disastrous. In an industry where the union is controlled by extreme reactionary and corrupt leaders such unity would, in practice, mean surrender to the employers. The East Coast AFL longshoremen were able to obtain partial victories not on the basis of unity with the Joe Ryan machine, but on the basis of repudiating him and his devious deals with the employers and continuing the struggle until the employers were forced to make

substantial concessions. Unity with Joe Ryan or his type of labor leader would only weaken a strike instead of strengthening it.

We have also stressed the need of unity on the basis of a full participation of the rank and file in a strike. Very often honest and even progressive-minded trade union leaders do not grasp the importance of this principle. The 1949 CIO brewers' strike in New York is a case in point. After several weeks on strike the leaders made a settlement with the employers. When the proposition was placed before the workers for ratification, they overwhelmingly voted against it. How could it come to pass that a leadership was repudiated by the membership? There can be only one answer: the leadership was isolated from the moods and sentiments of the workers. The collapse of the 1949 taxi strike is an even worse example of such a gap between leaders and rank and file. This could never have happened if the rank and file had played a leading role. Nor can there be real unity among the workers without a proper appreciation of the role of women in industry. In many organized fields such as radio, communications, electrical industry, office workers, and in service industries, women play a very decisive role. Hence, the need to conduct educational work against "male superiority." In the above, as well as in many other industries, no strike can be successful without the active participation of women.

Labor leaders with their hearts and minds set on winning a strike will themselves take the initiative in bringing about real unity, or will, at least, readily respond to genuine offers of unity for the common objective—a victorious strike.

## On the Line

### *Well Begun—Half Done*

**M**ILITARY leaders devote a great deal of time and energy to planning the start of a battle. When zero hour approaches, the plan is concrete in every respect. Nothing of importance must go wrong; nothing must be overlooked. Similarly strike leaders must have all their preparations ready for S-Day—for the day and the hour when the strike is to break.

A million and one details must be attended to that will result in good organization on S-Day. Among them are: selection and briefing of picket captains; printing of picket signs, picket cards, identifications; renting strike headquarters and meeting halls; securing sufficient cars and motorcycles; organization of flying squads; establishment of an efficient communication system; setting up of a messenger corps; arranging for bodyguards and protection of union offices; arranging for canteens and first aid sta-



tions. Each of these things requires people with administrative ability and sufficiently reliable to be entrusted with the performance of such duties. In addition, the various committees mentioned in the previous chapter must get into action. The strike leader must not let himself be overwhelmed with all these tasks. He must have deep confidence in the men in battle and their ability to come forward in time of stress and strain.

A strike that begins in a smooth and effective manner offers the union a great many advantages which have a bearing on the course of the battle. It certainly makes a lot of difference whether the workers respond one hundred per cent to a strike call. Surely, then, it is important to discuss and determine in advance the exact hour for the walkout. It is equally important to consider the steps the employer may take on S-Day and what the union can possibly do to counter them. By all means the union must have a well thought out and detailed plan for S-Day. Such a plan must strive to achieve two objectives: first, that the walkout shall culminate in an *effective first blow*; second, that maximum organization be achieved with a minimum of confusion.

### *Timing: The Value of Surprise*

In working on such a plan a strike leader should explore the possibilities of using the element of surprise. Although an approaching strike is never a complete surprise to the employer, yet keeping the exact day and hour a secret gives the workers certain distinct advantages. The shock of the suddenness of the strike, even though generally expected, often demoralizes the company personnel, and

by the time they rally most of the workers are already outside the gates.

The element of surprise is not of decisive importance in industries where workers have participated in many strikes, have been unionized over a long period of time, and consequently have a deep-rooted union consciousness. The coal miners are a good example. By now the miners have established a basic credo: "no contract, no work." However, in industries or individual plants where the workers are about to strike for their first contract, or where they are, relatively speaking, newly organized, like the CIO unions, the element of surprise can play an important role. Particularly in a situation where a company is making serious efforts to split the workers on a strike issue, and where the union is aware of a weak and wavering element, a surprise tactic can be of inestimable value.

During the 1937 steel strike in Youngstown, the actual walkout was planned in accordance with this principle. At the appointed hour, the workers from the more strongly organized departments, instead of going directly to the gates, marched through some weaker departments just to give encouragement and impetus to the weak and the wavering.

The element of surprise can also be effective in the extension of a strike. The 1937 General Motors sit-down strike in Flint, Michigan, offers a good example of this. The Chevrolet plant No. 4 is the most strategic plant of the company. To involve the workers of this plant in the strike was very decisive. The company was well prepared with guards and guns to prevent a sit-down in Plant No. 4. The leadership of the strike spread word and made all the outward appearance of preparing a sit-down in Plant

No. 9. While the armed guards and other company forces rushed to Plant No. 9, the union, with a specially prepared force, carried through the sit-down in Plant No. 4. "The main purpose of this elaborate procedure was to eliminate any chance that details of the new strike plan would get to the company. The careful timing of the strike, which was to start ten minutes earlier at Chevy 9 than at the other two plants, was the secret substance of the whole design to draw off the armed guards at Chevy 4 and thus lighten the task of the union forces at this crucial point. But everything depended on keeping the company in ignorance." (Henry Kraus, *The Many and the Few*.)

The element of surprise also works in favor of the union when there is a possibility that part of the company strategy is to recruit scabs. This is particularly true in a service industry. In the 1946 Western Union strike in New York the union made a public announcement of the day and hour of the strike—11 A.M. January 8th. Soon after this was made public the union "learned that the company intended to import large numbers of strikebreakers during that morning, and was hiring *provocateurs* through private detective agencies, whose job it would be to create chaos when the workers attempted to leave the building." To nullify the Company's efforts to prevent an effective walkout, the Strategy Committee decided to advance the hour to 7 A.M. "That evening a limited number of key workers were called in from the main centers and instructed to appear at the office at 6 A.M., January 8. At 6 A.M. the committee met and full plans were finalized for closing down the branch offices. . . . The plans of the union went into effect with clockwork precision. Within



an hour a mass picket line, thousands strong, completely ringed 60 Hudson Street."

### *The Power of a Perfect Walkout*

But even without the element of surprise a walkout is completely effective if the strike call is answered 100 per cent. The following examples will show how dramatic a shutdown can be when everyone answers the call.

On the afternoon of May 26, 1937, the leaders of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee met in Youngstown, Ohio, and came to the conclusion that "Little Steel," under the leadership of Tom Girdler, would not sign a contract without a strike. The conference ended late that afternoon and the strike began at 11:00 P.M. By early morning the *Youngstown Vindicator* in a strike *Extra* described the walkout: "The steel mill glow over the busy Mahoning Valley flickered last night and finally died entirely early today. The busy wheels of giant mills of the independent steel industry ground to a complete stop as a strike called by CIO leaders went into full effect at 11:00 P.M. Wednesday." In the same issue, the paper carried a large picture of a dead open hearth plant with this description: "Yesterday, black smoke, yellow smoke, brown smoke, and white smoke was pouring up from the stacks of Youngstown's Sheet & Tube's open hearth plants as molten iron was boiled through various stages to become steel. Today, 12 hours after the S. W. O. C. strike order was issued, *Vindicator* photographer Lloyd Jones found the air clear, the stacks cold, and hardly a man in sight at the open hearths." No wonder the executives of the steel plants in Youngs-



town on the same day announced: "We are not going to attempt operations."

Two weeks earlier, 27,000 Jones and Loughlin steel workers marched out on strike for union recognition. In both plants—in Pittsburgh and Aliquippa—the walkout was just as effective. Zero hour was 11:00 P.M., but shortly after 10:00 P.M. thousands of workers and their families were already converging upon the mill gates to witness a major steel strike, the first since 1919. At 11:00 P.M. the night shift came out. Smiling and proud men were met with cheers by the gathering crowds of day workers and their families as the stream of workers poured out of the mill on the South Side of Pittsburgh. As the night wore on, the glare of the mill died out, the plant was shut down tighter than a drum. In Aliquippa the whole town turned out. Union organizer Smiley Chatek addressed the crowd from an open window of a friendly photographer's studio. He spoke to the whole town. Next morning Philip Murray proudly told newsmen: "It's a perfect shutdown."

The 1937 walkouts in Youngstown, Campbell, Aliquippa, Pittsburgh, and other steel centers are good examples of an *effective first blow* on S-Day. To utilize further this initial victory the leaders of the strike announced to the press the results of the walkout with the comment that "Morale of our people could not be improved upon." The press release was worded as follows:

#### UNION LISTS OF STRIKERS IN MILLS OF 5 STATES

Youngstown, Ohio, May 28. The strikes in the plants of Republic Steel, Youngstown Sheet & Tube and Inland are practically 100 per cent solid, with a grand total of 77,240 workers out of 77,900 on strike, the S. W. O. C. declared late today.

"For reasons of strategy," the S. W. O. C. statement said, "no

strike has yet been called at the Southern plants of Republic Steel, where 2,800 are employed. Sentiment among the men there, however, is excellent."

The S. W. O. C. strike figures follow:

#### INLAND

Inland Steel Company, Chicago Heights, Illinois, 1,000 employees—all out.

Indiana Harbor, Illinois—10,500 employees—all out.

Total—11,500 employees—11,500 out.

#### YOUNGSTOWN

Youngstown Sheet & Tube Company, Brier Hill, Youngstown, Ohio—2,000 employees—all out.

Campbell Plant, Youngstown, Ohio—12,000 employees—all out.

South Chicago, Illinois—1,000 employees—all out.

Indiana Harbor, Illinois—8,000 employees—all out.

Total—23,000 employees—23,000 all out.

#### REPUBLIC

Republic Steel Corporation—the strike has been called at the following plants:

Corrigan-McKinney, Cleveland—3,500—all out.

Steel & Tube, Cleveland—500 employees—all out.

Cleveland Plant, Cleveland—3,600 employees—all out.

Truscon Steel—800 employees—all out.

Massillon, Ohio—4,000 employees—all out.

(Republic Steel and Union Drawn Steel) Youngstown, Ohio—6,000 employees—all out.

South Chicago, Illinois—3,000 employees—2,800 out.

Canton Tin Plate, Canton, Ohio—1,500 employees—all out.

Berger Plant, Canton, Ohio—1,200 employees—all out.

Stark Sheet Mill, Canton, Ohio—3,500 employees—all out.

Canton Steel, Canton, Ohio—3,500 employees—all out.

Warren Plant, 6,500—6,400 out, no production.

Upson Nut, Cleveland, Ohio—900 employees—all out.

Donner Plant, Buffalo, N. Y.—2,800 employees—80 per cent out.

Beaver Falls, Pa.—350 employees—all out.

Cumberland, Maryland—400 employees—all out.

Dillworth-Porter, Pittsburgh, Pa.—300 employees—all out.

Monroe, Mich.—1,800 employees—all out.

Niles, Ohio—1,000 employees—all out.

Total employees—43,400; number out, 42,740.

Thus, out of a total of 77,900—77,240 are out on strike. Morale of our people could not be improved upon. The men are determined that the strike shall be continued until these corporations execute a contract with the S. W. O. C.

This statement generated yet more enthusiasm, for Republic steel workers in Youngstown were anxious to learn if Republic steel workers in other towns had joined the strike, and vice versa. Whatever other weaknesses existed in the "Little Steel" strike, they certainly did not stem from any major defects on S-Day.

### *How to Handle Backward Workers*

It is not always possible to score a perfect walkout on the first day of a strike. This does not necessarily mean a fatal blow to the strike. Such a situation requires that the strike leaders throw the whole weight of the union to bring about a 100 per cent walkout. Often the mistake is made of immediately branding those who do not join the strike as scabs. Such rigidity could hurt the union, particularly in an industry where workers are newly organized. Instead, a speedy campaign must be developed to persuade such weak or backward workers to join the strike. They must be visited in their homes, and striking relatives should be among the visitors. The union representatives must explain to such workers the harm they are inflicting on those on strike, the immorality of scabbing, the permanent mark it leaves on their names in the community, as well as the actual danger they run of losing the job when the union wins. Only after these or similar steps have been taken and these workers still persist in



remaining on the side of the employer should they be branded as scabs and be kept out of the mill by strong picket lines. However, such a policy must be subordinated to the major consideration: utmost speed in eliminating production by scabs in time of strike.

### *Planning the First Picket Line*

Now for the second objective on S-Day—maximum organization, minimum confusion.

Never is it more important to remember the key organizational principle that “first things come first” than on S-Day. And what comes first on the first day of the strike? Naturally, the securing of a strong picket line. The first picket line must be planned before the day and hour the strike begins. Advance instructions must be given to shop stewards, or specially assigned union members, that when the strike is declared they are not to walk out of the mill and leave; that, instead, they must mobilize groups of workers in their departments to man the first picket line. Union representatives must be assigned to factory gates to be there at zero hour to help to organize the picket line, to have picket signs ready and, on the basis of what develops during the walkout, to give proper guidance and instructions.

Such union representatives at the plant exits on S-Day must be given strict instructions to call union or strike headquarters to report on the progress of the walkout. This information is vitally necessary to the leadership of the strike. At headquarters not everybody should be allowed to accept such messages. A thoroughly reliable worker must be assigned to this task. The minimum in-



formation required is as follows: time when called in, the place from where the call came, the person who made the call, and the condition of the walkout at that particular place. Such a log of reports must be immediately examined by one of the leaders and on the basis of these reports immediate action applied.

### *Reaching the Bulk of the Strikers*

Next in importance to the first picket line is reaching the bulk of the strikers. If the hour is appropriate, it may be wise to call upon the workers to march to a nearby meeting hall, or an outdoor place, where the union leaders will address the strikers, recapitulating the demands and imbuing them with a militant and confident spirit. If it is difficult to arrange such a mass meeting immediately after the walkout, then one must be planned within the next 24 hours. The sooner the better. This meeting must also be the occasion to issue all vital instructions. This could be done by word of mouth, or by printed or mimeographed sheets. The important thing is to have the instructions simple—what to do and what not to do, particularly on the picket line. The following are instructions issued to New York bus drivers during their spring, 1941 strike. They are simple and to the point.

#### NOTICE!

#### TO ALL MEMBERS ON STRIKE!

This strike was called by unanimous vote of the membership in the New York City Omnibus and Fifth Avenue Coach Branches to enforce your demands for higher wages and better working conditions on your job and for greater security for yourselves and your families.

To ensure victory, every man must do his part. Carry out every

duty assigned to you with discipline and diligence. Obey all orders of your picket captains. Do your duty to yourself, your fellow workers and your Union.

You will receive instructions throughout the strike. The first steps to be taken the first day are as follows:

1. Be sure you have your Union Book with you and exchange it for a picket card at Transport Hall the first day of the strike and that you have this picket card on your person until it is exchanged for your union book.

2. Be sure to wear your uniform whenever on picket duty or any other strike activity. Shop employees may wear either their work or civilian clothes.

3. Be sure to wear the Union Button at all times.

Conduct yourself on the picket line and at all other times and places as a decent citizen and responsible Union man. Disregard all rumors, unauthorized instructions or unofficial reports. Do not talk to strangers except to inform them there is a strike and what substitute facilities they may take. Refer all newspaper men and other persons making inquiries to Union Headquarters.

Above all, do not tolerate any breach of discipline, evasion of duty or violation of Union honor.

Stand firm! With determination and unity in our ranks we are invincible! We are marching for a great victory for organized transit Labor!

Matthias Kearns  
General Organizer  
Fifth Avenue Coach Branch  
and NYC Omnibus Branch

March 10, 1941

### *The Longer the Line—the Shorter the Strike*

The picket line is the heart and soul of the strike. It is the first line of defense and attack in any strike. It could be compared with a military sentry in a forward area. The task of a sentry is not so much to attack an approaching enemy as to hold it back until such a time when the main forces have been alerted. At other times the picket line is *the* main force.

Unfortunately, many strike leaders have paid little attention to this key aspect of strike action. In this respect old time union leaders are particularly great sinners. Some of them still stick to "professional" pickets and to worn out and dusty "unfair" signs. Among highly skilled craft unions there still lingers the idea that for a mechanic to put on a sign and picket is something that is not nice, something to be ashamed of. Through a constant process of education in trade unionism such thinking can and must be eliminated. The membership must be imbued with a sense of pride and honor when they participate in picketing. Just as a veteran speaks with pride of his participation in this or that battle, so must a union member feel about his part in a strike.

A picket line serves many significant purposes. First and foremost, it tells the world that this plant, mill, factory or mine is on strike. Often when men walk out, the employer inserts "help wanted" advertisements in a dozen newspapers in the vicinity of the strike-bound community. Many innocent unemployed workers respond. Only when they arrive at the gates of the plant do they discover for the first time that they have almost been misled into scabbing.

A picket line is and has been the only sound method of preventing professional scabs from entering the plant. If scabbing has been reduced to a minimum, it is in no small measure due to the effectiveness of the picket line.

Pickets also exert healthy moral pressure on strikers who are weak or weakening and ready to join back-to-work movements. It is not an uncommon sight during a strike to see a group of workers who the night before decided to return to work, but the morning after turn away when

they come face to face with a solid picket line. For this reason a strong picket line weeks after the strike begins is just as important, and even more important, than on the day the men walk out.

A strong picket line tends to have a desired effect on management. It is very demoralizing to the employer and company personnel to see their employees marching on that line with a high spirit and morale. Many an employer on the basis of his own observations of the strength of the picket line has made up his mind that it is futile to continue resistance to union demands. The psychological effect of a strong picket line on management can hardly be overestimated.

The picket line serves another major function: it demonstrates to the public that the employees are solidly behind the strike. Very often management claims that "outside agitators" are responsible for strikes. What better answer could there be than picket lines manned and led by the workers from the plant? The picket line helps to mold public opinion in support of the strike.

Lastly, there is no better place where unity can be preserved and strengthened than on the picket line. As has already been stated, during a strike nothing is more important than unity; company sponsored or inspired dissension could endanger the outcome of a strike. The picket line is the place where solidarity between man and man is being cemented most firmly.

### *Dangers of Token Picketing*

What kind of picket line can accomplish such objectives? Can a strike in which thousands of workers are



involved orient itself on token picketing? Too often this is the case. The argument goes that there is no need for mass picketing because the plant is shut and that the company is not endeavoring to resume production with scab labor. But the lack of picketing may encourage the company to bring in scabs. The lack of mass picketing creates a real danger that the mass of strikers may become rusty and dispersed and thus not prepared to meet sudden strikebreaking moves. Lack of mass picketing also prevents the workers involved from becoming active participants and turns them into passive observers. Mass picketing reduces to a minimum so-called emergency mobilizations that are often too late or inadequate.

Mass picketing is the surest road to victory. *The longer the picket line, the shorter the strike.* The picket line is like a mirror, it reflects the morale and strength of the strike. What a sight it must have been when thousands of Ford workers formed a picket line stretching for sixteen miles in a human wall around the Rouge plant!

Fortunately, there is within the ranks of organized labor a growing realization of the importance of mass picketing, particularly in mass production industries. Some unions have even added something new—a pre-strike picket line. Local 436, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, in Elizabeth, New Jersey, decided on a rehearsal mass picket line in front of the General Instrument Corporation while the union and the company were still engaged in negotiations. On June 2, 1948, for about an hour before the plant opened for the day, 750 workers, comprising the majority of the employees, staged this rehearsal. The union representative declared that it was “a rehearsal to show our people what it’s like and what picket

duties are," and "to show the company we mean business." (*New York Times*, June 3, 1948.)

The New York 1946 Western Union strike gave the finest examples of effective picketing. If the strike was victorious, it was mainly because the strike leaders were able to organize the kind of picket lines that attracted and caught the imagination of many thousands of union workers, whether AFL or CIO. The pickets and their sound truck even coined a slogan when union members from all over the city came to their support: "Grab a sign and join the line!"

Not without pride did the report to the 1946 ACA Convention declare: "The great picket line . . . became a symbol of this determination. Thousands of unionists joined our lines, swelling it to proportions never before seen in our city. Public figures from all walks of life endorsed our strike and many came to the picket line itself. Religious, fraternal and political organizations gave their support. The picket line was not a straggling group of weary people, but a singing, fighting picket line. When the Company could not break it up by tricks and maneuvers, when the police couldn't frighten the people away, nor the cold keep them away, the Company went into the courts in an attempt to remove, through the infamous injunction, what they couldn't break. . . . The Picket Director's Committee had to maintain picket lines involving more than 5,000 of our members in many different localities. Never once did the picketing break down during the entire course of the strike, in spite of the fact that the picket lines had to be maintained at night as well as day, in spite of the bitter cold, in spite of the active

interference of the police and in spite of the activities of Company agents circulating among the strikers."

Of course, it is not possible to keep a mass picket line going all the time. Nor is it necessary. Those in charge of picketing must allow lulls during certain hours of the day or certain days in the week, but this in no way minimizes the importance and the need to orient a strike toward a policy of effective mass picketing.

Regardless of the size of the strike, or its character, or where it takes place, the scab is in the final analysis the most dangerous factor. This explains why very often the strikers develop more of a hatred toward the scab than the employer, even though the scab is only a company tool. During tense moments, when State or federal troops enter, or are about to enter, the strike scene, one often hears such expressions as "soldiers can't dig coal," or "run the railroads," or "make steel." But scabs may.

Nor does it matter very much, in the long run, whether the scabs are "professionals," or workers who did not go out on strike, or workers who joined a back-to-work movement. The success or failure of a strike depends on the union's ability to halt production for the duration. Hence, to combat scabs is in every strike one of the major objectives of the union.

The danger of professional scabs is greater in smaller strikes. In organized large and mass production industries, where tens of thousands of workers may be involved in a strike, the employers can hardly expect to man their plants with scabs. Thus they concentrate on weakening the will to fight among their own employees, developing dissension and other divisive methods, and work up to a back-to-work movement.



In recent years scabbing has become as immoral and as indecent a "profession" as prostitution. This is the result of the vigorous campaign which organized labor conducted over many generations against scabbing. Nearly seventy years ago, during a strike of textile workers in Paterson, N. J., one of its leaders called a strikebreaker a "scab." For this he was arrested, tried and convicted. During that trial a labor attorney formulated a definition of a "scab" that became famous:

A "scab" is to his trade what a traitor is to his country. He is the first to take advantage of any benefit secured by united action, and never contributes anything towards its achievement. He is used during a struggle to defeat his fellow-workmen, and though coddled for the time being by the employer he serves, when peace is restored he is cast out, shunned by his employer, his fellow-workmen, and the whole human family. (S. Gompers, *Seventy Years of Life and Labor*, Vol. I.)

Years later Jack London, the great American writer, wrote what has become a classic characterization of a scab:

After God had finished the rattlesnake, the toad, and the vampire, he had some awful substance left with which he made a SCAB. A SCAB is a two-legged animal with a corkscrew soul, a water-logged brain, and a combination backbone of jelly and glue. Where others have hearts he carries a tumor of rotten principles.

When a scab comes down the street men turn their backs and angels weep in heaven, and the devil shuts the gates of hell to keep him out. No man has a right to SCAB as long as there is a pool of water deep enough to drown his body in, or a rope long enough to hang his carcass with. Judas Iscariot was a gentleman compared with a SCAB. For betraying his Master, he had character enough to hang himself. A SCAB HASN'T.

Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. Judas Iscariot sold his Saviour for thirty pieces of silver. Benedict Arnold sold his country for a promise of commission in the British Army. The modern strike-breaker sells his birthright, his country, his wife, his



children, and his fellow-men for an unfulfilled promise from his employer, trust or corporation.

Essau was a traitor to himself, Judas Iscariot was a traitor to his God. Benedict Arnold was a traitor to his country.

**A STRIKEBREAKER IS A TRAITOR TO HIS GOD, HIS COUNTRY, HIS FAMILY AND HIS CLASS!**

A worker on strike has a moral right, a legal right, and a duty to protect his job and the jobs of his fellow workers. So it is not strange that when it comes to fighting scabs, strikers exhibit their highest degree of militancy. To them the elimination of scabs is synonymous with the preservation of their jobs, which in turn means their very livelihood. The struggle against scabs assumes a variety of forms, each according to the peculiarities of the particular strike. These forms of struggle depend on the type of scabs used.

As a rule there are three chief sources from which employers recruit scabs. In newly or recently organized shops the employers may still be able to mislead a number of workers who will be induced to remain inside the factory. With such workers the union must reason, must appeal to their conscience, and try to exert a maximum of moral pressure. At least this must be the starting point. When such efforts fail, this group must be branded for what they are and treated as enemies of their fellow workers, the union, and the community. Often this group remains inside the plant for the duration of the strike. While the union continues to make constant appeals to such workers to leave the plant and join the strike, it at the same time takes all necessary measures to keep these scabs isolated.

How effective such isolation of scabs inside plants can be is described by none other than Tom Girdler, the man

who thought he could break the CIO. In great detail Mr. Girdler describes what happened to an insignificant group of steel workers in the Niles and Warren plants who did not join the 1937 strike. The strikers picketed the highways approaching the Niles plant. Nor would the railroad workers deliver food to scabs. Within three days after the strike began, Girdler wrote in his *Boot Straps*:

300 of our men were facing a choice of starvation or surrender.

Night had fallen and we were sick at heart because we had failed to keep our promise to Sam Brown at Niles. Scarcely a man left the Republic offices in Cleveland for more than a few hours that night. When morning came Sam Brown reported by telephone, said he had pinched out enough food from the previous evening's meal to give his 300 men a slim breakfast. But they had eaten every scrap. There was not, Sam said, enough food in the plant to feed a mouse. But he felt better when we told him how we were going to get food to Niles that day. We were going to fly it! . . . Airplanes were the only answer . . .

"Sam, there will be grub there in ten or fifteen minutes. The airplane is on the way. The boys are going to try to drop the stuff inside the plant."

Mr. Girdler went on to describe Republic Steel's first experience in a strikebreaking air lift:

. . . in a few minutes Sam was back on the wire.

"Now it's coming! I can see it right now, from where I'm standing at my office window."

Charley White was repeating Sam Brown's report for the benefit of an anxious group of officials clustered around him. Several were listening on other telephones.

Then old Sam's voice came over the wire, charged with excitement!

"He's coming down! He's coming down! Lower! Coming lower! We're going to get it now."

Then Sam's voice again: "There it comes. He's dropped a bundle. Breakfast's late, but here she comes!"

Then: "Damn it, Mr. White, he missed the plant."

"What!"

"Yes, sir. Two sacks landed outside the fence. Right now all those pickets are scrambling around snatching our food."

On our first try we had missed a 216 acre plant.

The outcome was that Republic Steel was forced to buy a fleet of eleven planes to deliver food to scabs in the Niles and Warren plants. This company measure dramatically points up the effectiveness of picketing that results in the isolation of scabs inside the plants.

The second chief scabbing source is a back-to-work movement. This is such an important strikebreaking weapon that a special chapter will be devoted to it.

The third source is the professional scabs. Strikers learned long ago how to handle this element.

### *Can Strikebreaking Ever Be "Legitimate"?*

No discussion of scabbery can be complete without some consideration of certain forms of strikebreaking that have recently developed and that are far more dangerous than anything the employers have conjured up so far. These forms of strikebreaking—not all of them entirely new—arise out of sharp differences within the labor movement, aided and abetted by the Taft-Hartley law.

One form operates like this: A union under left leadership goes out on strike. A rival union under right leadership declares that the strike was called for "political" reasons. The strike is declared "illegitimate," and the workers' picket line instead of being honored is branded a "political picket line." On this basis strikebreaking becomes "legitimate."

This "dog eat dog" policy expresses itself in another form. A union goes out on strike. A rival union forms a



clique within the ranks of the strikers to advocate a secession movement. During a difficult moment in the strike these elements invoke the Taft-Hartley law and demand an election to determine which union represents the workers. Thus, instead of presenting a solid front against the employer, worker solidarity splits wide open in a way that even the Mohawk Valley strikebreaking formula—dealt with in later chapters—could seldom accomplish. If the split ends in victory for the rival union, this invariably means a back-to-work movement with disastrous consequences for the workers.

It is almost incomprehensible that a labor union should assume the role of a strikebreaker, yet it has happened a number of times. Let us cite a couple of examples. In 1948 the workers of the Caterpillar Tractor Company in Peoria, Illinois, went out on strike under the leadership of the United Farm Equipment and Metal Workers Union, then affiliated with the CIO. They were striking for a new contract and wage increase. Another CIO affiliate, the UAW, dispatched a group of organizers, allocated \$100,000, and opened a press barrage against the Farm Equipment Union. The UAW invoked the Taft-Hartley law as their gimmick. The strike was broken, the workers returned to work without a wage increase, and the UAW took over a demoralized FE local. Again, in 1948 in Oakland, California, the AFL grocery clerks went out on strike. The AFL teamsters, under the leadership of Dave Beck, offered the employers a teamsters' contract and thus broke the strike.

Raiding of one union by another in time of strike, injecting of the Taft-Hartley law by one union against another, and branding picket lines "political" as a justification for crossing them are the most alarming developments



in our trade union movement. Those who resort to such methods to victimize other unions will themselves become the victims of such a policy. Labor's rank and file is permeated with a sense of deep-rooted solidarity. It is inevitable that, no matter what justification is offered, they will rise up against leaders who indulge in strikebreaking.

### *What a Picket Plan Must Include*

To organize and maintain mass picket lines is no easy organizational task. It requires a well-conceived plan, blueprinted before the strike begins. Such a plan for mass picketing must be realistic and flexible enough to meet the needs of the specific strike. The plan must deal with each of the following problems:

1. *How many strikers are needed daily to man the lines, minimum and maximum?*

To determine this the union must take into consideration the number of workers involved in the strike, the number of plants or factories, and the great importance of involving the rank and file in active participation.

2. *Which are the most important plants or entrances and how are these to be covered?*

Often a strike involves more than one plant in the same community. Not all the plants are of equal importance. There is always a key plant or department, upon which production, or lack of production, depends. The strike-breaking plans of the employer will depend on what happens at the key point of production. Clearly, the union cannot treat such a plant or department in a routine manner. The best picket captains, the most reliable union members and the largest group of pickets must be assigned

to such key points, even at the expense of neglecting secondary places.

The key production points are not the sole consideration in organizing the picket lines. The entrance to a plant close to the office is of great importance. In times of strike the offices of management become the general headquarters of the opposite camp. The headquarters are observation posts and important conclusions are drawn on the basis of what is observed. Obviously there is need for a strong and effective picket line close to the office. Let the employer and management see their skilled, their oldest and most popular workers on the line and it will dampen their enthusiasm for holding out too long.

*3. What are the vulnerable and possible danger spots for a breakthrough and how shall such developments be prevented?*

Just as a military commander constantly seeks for the weakest link in the enemy's chain, so does an employer in time of strike. Experienced strike leaders can foresee a breakthrough and prepare against its occurring by strengthening weak links. Often a back-to-work movement does not begin through a main gate where the picket lines are strong; it is the unexpected places that the union must have an eye on. This is particularly true of plants that connect with railroad lines, canals or rivers. Plants isolated from communities where the strikers live must be taken up as special problems in relation to picketing. But vulnerability, it should be remembered, is not limited to physical layouts of plants or their geographical locations. These other aspects of vulnerability will be dealt with in other chapters.

*4. How shall strikers who have not reported for strike duty be reached?*

This is a major problem in most strikes which involve large groups of workers. As has already been stated, strikes in which workers are passive observers and not active participants are in constant danger of ending in defeat. A great deal of work in training the workers for active strike duty must be done before and all through the battle.

An appropriate method must be found whereby each striker is accountable to an authoritative committee for his action or lack of action. Some unions conduct regular roll calls. Unions distributing strike relief do so only on presentation of picket cards showing the record of the individual worker on the picket line. Still others ask their members to deposit their union books and exchange them for picket cards.

*5. How can the strikers on the picket line be doubled or tripled during emergencies?*

Wise leadership takes for granted that during the life of a strike emergencies are bound to arise and prepares for such occasions. Usually strike emergencies arise as a result of a sudden or unexpected company move designed to weaken or destroy the strike. Only the application of immediate action can frustrate the employer's objectives. The ability of strike leaders to rally the membership in such emergencies is of decisive importance.

In the 1937 steel strike in Youngstown the strike leaders organized a very efficient flying squad equipped with cars and motorcycles ready for dispatch to any plant or gate where trouble developed. After the squad had been functioning a few days, the leaders hit upon the idea of listening to short-wave police instructions, and often arrived on the scene of difficulty simultaneously with the police radio cars. In Flint, Michigan, during the January 1937 auto strike, a well organized scout system was established serv-



ing as an efficient medium for mobilizing large groups of strikers when emergencies arose.

*6. How shall steady contact between the top strike leaders and the special personnel in charge of picketing be maintained?*

The picket captains—the men in charge of the line—are entrusted with major responsibility in any strike. Theirs is a difficult task even under the best circumstances. To bring the strikers to the picket line, to keep them on the line, to maintain discipline in face of provocation, to observe all movement in and around the plant and to sense the mood of the strikers themselves are just a few of the responsibilities of picket captains.

The policy-making group among the strike leaders can learn a great deal from the picket captains about the morale of the men, their thinking, the degree of stability of the strike and other vital information which has a direct bearing on shaping strike strategy. The picket captains, in turn, need to be constantly briefed and imbued with confidence in victory. It is for them to transmit this confidence to the men on the line.

*7. How can picket lines be protected from intimidation and attack?*

Because picketing is the heart and soul of a strike, the employers concentrate on weakening the lines. They do this at first through intimidation. They spread rumors among strikers that if the strike is lost those who picketed will not be allowed to return to work. Through “missionaries” working among women they try to create an atmosphere conducive to the idea that picketing is “dangerous” so that the wives, instead of encouraging their husbands to join the line, will become a force that holds them



back. The employers also encourage the idea in the community that "responsible citizens" don't picket, etc.

The union must counteract this kind of intimidation by fostering the conviction that it is an honor and privilege to participate on the line. As has been said in a previous chapter, much of this work has to be accomplished before the strike starts.

Provocation and physical assault can occur on the picket line any time; for the professional strikebreaker operating behind the scene is constantly scheming provocation. A willing tool or "plant" within the ranks of the strikers gives the company the best possible chance of developing provocative action. It is all so simple. A man with a picket sign, or some other person identified with the strike, attacks a representative of management. "Friendly" newspapers appear on the streets with screaming headlines condemning "strike violence." To reduce such provocation to a minimum is a responsibility strike leaders must face.

People known to the union as being unreliable should be excluded from picket duty and carefully watched; an *agent provocateur* will sooner or later show his colors. During the 1937 steel strike in Youngstown, an officer of a local union constantly urged "rushing the gates," now and then he carried a concealed weapon, criticized the leaders for lack of action. Some time later he was exposed as a member of the Republic Steel police force in Buffalo who had been transferred to Youngstown in expectation of a strike. But company agents are briefed not only to start violence; some are instructed to bring to the picket line seeds of defeatism. Theirs is a "what-is-the-use" line, the strike is "lost," and "let us not be suckers," etc. These are preliminaries to enrolling workers into a back-to-work movement.

A partial answer to provocation and provocateurs is a reliable, able and vigilant corps of picket captains. The stronger the corps of picket captains, the less the chances of provocation. Equally important is the constant education of the rank and file that will result in greater alertness to the methods and schemes of company agents.

It is a common employer practice to plan physical attacks on picket lines, force the strikers to defend themselves and then condemn them for it. Such attacks, carried through by a specially prepared company force, may come from inside the plant or from without.

Self-defense is not only a moral but a legal American tradition. American workers will not tolerate violence without fighting back, they will defend themselves with all the strength and power at their command. They will fight back on the picket lines and they will utilize all legal channels to expose and bring to the bar of justice those who started the violence.

In recent years organized labor faced the problem of strike violence and developed ways to counter it. Among these was the enactment of a federal law prohibiting the import of scabs from other States; and the enactment of State laws and city ordinances prohibiting the swearing in of deputy marshals with criminal records. In some strikes the unions prevailed upon county and city authorities to deputize strikers. In other strikes the unions established "restricted areas" and outsiders could not approach the picket lines without a permit from strike headquarters.

*8. How can the line be fed, particularly during bad weather?*

A hot cup of coffee during cold weather or an ice-cold drink during hot weather is a great morale builder. During the war our army and Red Cross spent many thousands of

dollars to give our GI's this kind of service, thousands of miles away from our shores. But often it is necessary to provide more than a hot or cold drink. During some strikes unions have served sandwiches and even hot plates right on the picket lines. This practice should be encouraged. It is particularly important to serve the pickets on the line when there is no convenient restaurant nearby, or when the strike has been a long one and the strikers cannot easily afford to go to a restaurant. Such a program also is valuable in that it busies the women in the preparation and distribution of the food. Instead of staying at home and brooding, the wives themselves become involved in the strike—at all times a very positive development.

*9. How can the lines be made lively and interesting for the strikers and for the public?*

A picket line that is dull, uneventful, and lifeless does not attract either the strikers or the public. Marching up and down becomes monotonous. To break such monotony and to imbue the pickets with a spirit of enthusiasm is an essential part of a picket plan.

In strikes where thousands of workers are involved and where picketing takes place on a mass scale, a sound truck can be put to good use. A strike leader can address the picket line at regular intervals; popular records can be played; union songs can enliven the line.

Some unions have livened up the line by distributing daily strike bulletins. In other strikes the picket captains have given daily "orientation" talks, encouraging the men to ask questions, or answering newspaper attacks against the strike.

Special picket line events to attract both strikers and the public must be planned all the time. Such special events



include the appearance of the most popular strike leaders, outstanding pro-labor public officeholders, friendly popular actors, writers, or church representatives. Some unions have on occasion engaged a band to play at the plant gate. In strikes in which a large group of young people are involved an outdoor dance can add a lot of color. Whenever a fairly large group of workers are on strike, the leaders can always discover plenty of talent—guitar and harmonica players, singers and dancers. The happier the picket line, the higher the morale, the sadder the employer. Good spirits on the line are also very helpful from a public relations point of view.

10. *How can a reliable and constant communication system between pickets and strike headquarters be maintained?*

No picket plan can be considered sound without a well conceived communication system. In working out such a system one must consider *reliability, speed, privacy and general efficiency*.

Reliability stands at the top of the list. It is common knowledge that wire tapping is widely practiced even though it is against the law. Information of a confidential nature must not be relayed through a telephone; it is perfectly ridiculous for a picket captain to call the union office only to be connected with the company or local police station. This is particularly true of days when a tense situation exists. A system of runners on motorcycles or in automobiles can be established. When the telephone is being used, the less said the better. During some strikes simple code systems have been established between picket captains and strike headquarters.

To avoid misinterpretation of any kind, it is best to spell



out here what is meant by confidential strike information. The following would be of this nature: massing of scabs near the plant and the need for immediate reinforcement of the line; suspicious movements within the plant; observing professional strikebreakers and criminal elements, etc.

The ten points discussed above just about cover the minimum needs for a picket program. For the sake of emphasis one thing needs to be repeated: such a program must be blueprinted *before* the walkout.

### *Sample Instructions to Pickets*

There is, finally, the problem of constantly orienting, briefing and instructing the pickets. In recent years it has become a common practice to distribute to the pickets a set of instructions that must be followed and rigidly carried out. Such instructions, it has already been pointed out, should be simple directives—what to do and what not to do on the picket line. The following are a good example. They are instructions issued by local unions of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America to the strikers of Remington Rand Company while on strike in the summer of 1947:

1. Maintain strict discipline on the picket line, the strike headquarters and in the vicinity of the plant. Keep a cool head at all times. Do not fall for any provocations. Report immediately any individuals who are attempting to provoke trouble or incidents. Be firm but courteous in dispatching your picket line duties.

2. Everyone who shows a picket a picket line pass must be permitted to enter the plant. All others must be told to report to the Union Office, or that they cannot enter the plant unless they get a pass.

3. Do not permit anyone under the influence of liquor on the picket line, or to stay in the vicinity of the strike. Escort him away

to some place where he cannot do damage. A person who is under the influence of liquor can cause a lot of trouble. No drinking is permitted on the picket line or its vicinity.

4. All questions that are asked by a striker or anybody else must be answered. When a striker is approached by a stranger he should tell him to see the picket captain. If the picket captain does not think he should answer, then he should refer the stranger to the strike headquarters. If the strike headquarters does not know the answer or does not think they should answer then he should call the Union Office to find out what he should say or do. **IF IN DOUBT OR TO BE SURE, CALL THE UNION OFFICE.**

5. Strikes are won or lost on the picket line. Remember the bigger and stronger the picket line, the shorter the strike. Everyone must serve on the picket line. Contact pickets who you know do not show up to do their part. They may have legitimate reasons why they do not report for picket duty and then they may not.

6. Everyone should report every day at least one hour before their regular work shift for mass picketing. This is everyone's duty. In addition, everyone will be assigned a regular period of picketing, probably about once a week. Check a day or two before to find out exactly when you should report. Remind your pickets a day or two before by visiting or phoning them.

7. Keep a strict record of the attendance of all pickets. Punch pickets' record cards after picketing has been done. Check up on all absences.

8. Report whatever happens on the picket line and its vicinity to the strike headquarters before going off duty.

9. Make sure that everyone knows the responsible picket captain or officers on duty at your station.

10. Report all anti-union rumors and activities immediately to the Union Office.

11. Maintain daily contact with the Union Office so that you may be fully posted on all developments. You will thus be able to keep your pickets informed at all times.

**MAINTAIN DISCIPLINE AND ORDER—WHEN IN DOUBT CALL THE UNION.**

## On the Offensive

### *All Together or "One at a Time"*

TO MAINTAIN the offensive is the core of correct strike strategy. On the basis of his experiences in the great 1919 steel strike, William Z. Foster writes on this subject as follows: "We must attack always, or at the worst be preparing to attack. This theory applies as well to the class war of industry as to military war on the battlefield. The workers, like soldiers (and they are the same human beings and subject to the same psychological laws), fight best on the offensive. They are then fired with a sense of power and victory; defensive fighting demoralizes them and fills them with defeatism. Every good strike leader, like every good general, must take this basic fact into consideration."

What does this theory of offensive imply in a practical sense?

It means first of all to spread the struggle. The greater

the number involved in the strike, the stronger the feeling and confidence of the workers. This strategy was very ably applied by the CIO in the early days in the automobile industry, particularly in General Motors, where the strike spread from plant to plant. In the steel strike in 1937, the CIO used the same strategy. Instead of striking individual corporations of the "Little Steel" combination, the S. W. O. C. struck most of them at the same time, spreading the strike to seven states and involving 80,000 workers.

When it becomes obvious that the struggle will be sharp and protracted, additional forces must be thrown into battle (if possible) and the strike spread further to render the companies involved additional hard blows. This could be termed a second offensive. In 1919, Foster pleaded with the mine and railroad leaders for joint action he was unable to obtain. In the 1937 steel strike this was partially realized. The UMWA called out on strike 10,000 coal miners in "captive" mines of Bethlehem, Youngstown Sheet & Tube, and Republic Steel. All other coal operators were notified by the union not to attempt to fill the orders of the steel companies. Simultaneously with this action, the CIO dispatched a crew of organizers to Minnesota and Michigan to swiftly organize ore miners working in the mines of the "Little Steel" companies, while the National Maritime Union proceeded with the organization of the barge workers with the hope of preventing the shipment of ore to the struck steel centers before the lakes froze. Here we see a very excellent example of offensive tactics that galvanized the workers on the picket lines.

In recent years, however, in some trade union circles there has developed a certain concept of strike strategy



that is detrimental to organized labor. It makes fighting on the offensive pretty nearly impossible. This strategy has come to be known as the "one-at-a-time" strategy. It is based on a theory that only one company in a certain industry will be struck. Then the union would exploit the competitive advantages of other companies as "a club over the heads of the struck company" and force a favorable wage settlement that would then in turn become a "pattern" for the rest of the industry. This strategy was practiced in the auto industry and proved a detriment to the union and the workers. The basic fallacy of this theory is that it exaggerates the importance of competitive relations between employers. It negates the well established fact that when it comes to a battle between labor and capital, the employers in most cases temporarily forget their immediate competitive interests and form a united front against organized labor. This is particularly true of basic and trustified industries.

Walter Reuther used this kind of strategy in 1946 when only the General Motors workers were called out on strike to establish a "wage pattern." The results were disastrous. The strike lasted four months. The contract that was finally signed opened the door to increased speed-up and "disciplining" of workers. The "one-at-a-time" theory when tested in struggle proved a failure from labor's point of view. The strike not only failed to establish a satisfactory "pattern" but became a boomerang for the rest of the auto workers.

There are certain exceptional periods when such strategy could work. When labor is generally on the offensive, when a Congress and an administration follow a progressive course, and when there is a crystallized wage move-

ment. But when such conditions don't exist, the safest course is a united strategy involving all the workers in a major battle. It is not conceivable that in the years to come labor could win major demands based on the "one-at-a-time" strike strategy.

### *Broader Strategy*

It is a major weakness of our trade union movement that it rarely develops a strike strategy based on the united action of several unions. Before the birth of the CIO industrial unions, it was even a common occurrence to have one craft union in the same industry striking while other AFL unions were working. Unfortunately such practices are still current in industries where craft unionism exists. In an article analyzing the victorious strike of the Chicago printers, Woodruff Randolph, president of the International Typographical Union, raised this fundamental issue not without justifiable bitterness. He pointed out that "the Chicago employers enjoyed the regular services of all other unions involved in the newspaper printing industry, many of whom were tied by contracts and prevented by the Taft-Hartley Law and *their own Internationals from helping the printers*. Many failed to comprehend the basic issues involved and even now will turn over and go to sleep again." (*The Typographical Journal*, October 1949.)

The AFL printers and their leaders had a right to complain against this "sleeping melancholy" of craft unionism. The printers spent eleven and a half million dollars on strikes arising out of the Taft-Hartley law.

This failure to develop broader strike strategy is not limited to craft unionism. Even the industrial unions of

the CIO never really developed a broad strike strategy. To be sure, some formal efforts were made in this direction, particularly between steel, auto and electrical unions. But their efforts never went much further than discussions on top levels, or statements to the press.

The great importance of a broader strike strategy came up during the 1949 coal and steel strikes. John L. Lewis brought up the question and in his usual bold manner directly addressed William Green and Philip Murray. He stressed the great importance of the steel strike and the need for the entire organized labor movement to rally behind the steel workers and make this struggle "the uncompromising fight of all American labor." Lewis proposed raising a joint strike defense fund of two and a half million dollars a week to make it possible for the steel workers to continue fighting. This proposal had a galvanizing effect on the steel workers and the rank and file of all unions. There was a moment of hope; perhaps the powerful unions, regardless of affiliations, would join in a common effort at a time when labor was at a crossroad.

Murray's reply was of a positive nature. He endorsed the plan and declared that the miners were also "engaged in a mighty struggle with powerful employers in the coal industry . . . such a defense fund must obviously be available to members of the United Mine Workers." Then Murray went on to say that "The United Steelworkers of America and, I am sure, other equally minded affiliates of the CIO, stand prepared to join with the United Mine Workers and affiliates with the AFL to pool their resources for the common defense and general welfare of the labor movement."

Labor throughout the country anxiously waited to hear

what the AFL leadership would say to this. When Green's reply came, all hope for united action disappeared. In his answer to Lewis, Green stated: "The pooling of labor's resources while divided as it is today is impossible and impracticable." Once more Mr. Green repeated that there can be no united action without "organic unity."

Again an effort to develop broader strike strategy had ended in failure. Disappointed over the results, Lewis in a bitter frame of mind wrote Green: "You have justified my judgment. I did not think you could do anything. You didn't. You rarely do. Unfortunately, you follow invariably your well known policy of anxious inertia. You cry aloud for labor peace and labor security, but seldom do anything to achieve it."

It does not follow, however, that because such broader strategy has not been realized on top labor levels it cannot be achieved on local levels. In numerous cases it has been achieved. The general strikes that occurred in recent years are also an encouraging sign. Eventually this broader type of strike strategy will become the predominant factor in all major strikes. When that day comes fighting on the offensive will cease to be a problem.

### *Forestalling Employer Tactics*

To maintain an offensive often means to prevent the employers from developing their own. What that offensive is most liable to be, experience has demonstrated time after time. To the employers the most effective method of breaking a strike is the use of unadulterated terror. Whether this terror comes by way of company police, professional thugs (often deputized), city police, or State



militia depends on the political situation, but that gas attacks, clubbings and shootings will be part of the employer's plan admits of no doubt. The best offensive strategy the union can use is to nip the planned terror in the bud.

This is exactly what happened when in 1937 the 27,000 steel workers of Jones and Laughlin in Aliquippa and Pittsburgh went out on strike. The company was ready for a blood bath. The union leaders immediately wired the Governor of the dangers involved. Aware of the political strength of the CIO in Pennsylvania, the Governor flew to Aliquippa and warned the company and local police against any violence. The Governor's warning and his visit to the picket line stimulated the already strong morale of the workers and upset the devious plans of the company. Within a few days the workers were triumphant. In a number of other strikes, the union was able to disrupt the plan of terror by forcing the authorities to deputize the strikers instead of professional strikebreakers. This took away a powerful weapon from the employers and taught labor that it must fight for this right in every strike.

Fighting on the offensive also means timely exposure of all kinds of so-called "innocent" public committees secretly sponsored by the employers for the purpose of molding public opinion against the strikers and their unions. At times these committees are so cleverly set up that often they even mislead the workers themselves. In Akron, Ohio, for example, during the great rubber strikes there suddenly sprang up an organization known as the Greater Akron Association. It was headed by the "finest" citizens in the community. The avowed purpose of the organization was to get new industries into Akron, to promote a

“more active interest in civic affairs” and to “coordinate some of the different activities” of existing organizations in the city, such as the City Club, the Kiwanis Club and so forth. This organization sponsored radio talks, full-page advertisements and public meetings. Shortly afterward the union, with the help of the Senate La Follette Committee, exposed the Greater Akron Association as a conspiracy against the Rubber Workers Union planned out by the “public relations firm” Hill and Knowlton and paid for by the rubber companies. This same firm organized or directed the Canton Development Corporation that sponsored a wide “community education” program in Canton, Ohio. In Youngstown and other steel centers, similar organizations sprang up, all pretending to be “neutral” and “impartial.” In many respects such organizations, because they hide their origin, are more dangerous than the open vigilante movements. The union must not hesitate to expose them before their prestige is established.

### *Examples of Solidarity*

Reserves are a very important factor in developing and maintaining the offensive. It stands to reason, then, that large sections of the labor movement must be mobilized in support of the strike.

The spirit of solidarity is highly developed in the ranks of the American workers. This solidarity is so strong that it often brushes aside affiliations, craft interests and orders of conservative union officials. The Seattle and San Francisco general strikes are historic examples of such solidarity. In the many recent strikes in the automobile industry, such solidarity was demonstrated time and again.

It was developed during the 1937 steel strike. In Warren, Ohio, the court issued an injunction against the strikers. Gus Hall, the Warren strike leader, appealed to labor to defeat this move. Within 24 hours, 6,000 workers walked out in a sympathy strike. Even the conservative Warren AFL Central Labor Union went on record for a general strike. In Canton, the AFL and CIO unions united against the "Citizens' Law and Order League" of vigilantes and officially informed the Mayor that a general strike would be called if the vigilantes attempted to smash the picket line. In Youngstown, as a protest against the murder of two strikers at the Republic plant, the powerful AFL Teamsters and Truck Drivers Local No. 377 declared a general strike. The 1,800 truck drivers brought to a standstill all deliveries and prevented all out-of-town trucks from entering the city. At the same time the leaders of the AFL Central Labor body petitioned the court for a temporary injunction to restrain the Mayor from increasing the police force, buying military equipment and hiring gunmen. The spirit of solidarity among AFL workers was so great that William Green and other Federation leaders acknowledged the "bonds of sympathy." At a press conference in Washington a reporter asked Mr. Green if these AFL local unions would be punished. His reply was significant:

Situations such as those in Youngstown and Canton are of the kind which will develop during strikes. They are entirely due to the local situation and the bond of sympathy which exists between workers, no matter what formal group they may be associated with. They instinctively help and support those who are in distress and it is a good thing. They will not be punished. (*Youngstown Vindicator*, June 17, 1937.)



The Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen stopped switching service at the Republic plants in Youngstown and Canton, crippling rail communications into these plants. The action was taken because the Pennsylvania Railroad sent armed guards to both plants. The railroad crews refused to work in the yards where there were armed guards.

In the great 1941 Ford strike, the AFL teamsters who haul Ford cars to other states immediately notified the strikers that not a truck would roll as long as there was a strike at Ford. Despite the split within the labor movement, it is possible to obtain a degree of solidarity and support from some top labor leaders of an opposite Federation. Thus, in January 1946, when 175,000 General Motors employees were out on strike, five AFL union presidents joined a group of CIO leaders to rally the full support of organized labor behind the UAW-CIO strike. In 1947 when John L. Lewis and the UMWA were engaged in a bitter struggle against Government injunctions, the leaders of the UE locals in the Pittsburgh area offered all-out support, including strike action if need be.

### *Bringing Up Reserves*

Like military commanders, strike leaders must be prepared to throw in reserves.

There are several classifications of such reserves. First, there are the workers most closely related to the strikers. These may be workers of the same industry who are not involved in the struggle. For example, the General Motors and Chrysler workers would be the natural reserves for the Ford strike. There can be no doubt that if the Ford workers had been involved in a protracted struggle, the



General Motors and Chrysler workers would have played the role of a powerful reserve. Reserves can also be organized from related industries and nearby industrial centers.

Such reserves are especially valuable during crucial moments in a strike. When on June 23, 1937 the steel companies in Youngstown announced that next morning a back-to-work movement would begin and that scabs would be fully armed, the strike leaders sent out an S O S call to nearby Akron. Within a few hours the Rubber Workers Union mobilized 4,000 members and a great automobile caravan swept over the main roads from Akron to Youngstown. The main column was preceded by motorcycle scouts who reported police barricades and guided the rubber workers over unguarded back roads to their objectives in the Youngstown strike areas. During the Bethlehem strike in Johnstown, Pa., the Mayor organized a mob of armed vigilantes and unleashed a wave of terror. More than 6,000 miners from the nearby mines declared a "holiday" and rushed to Johnstown to support their brother steel workers. On that day a U.P. dispatch from Johnstown read as follows:

More than 6,000 coal miners on a "labor holiday" from the soft coal fields marched into Johnstown today to aid union steel workers striking against the Bethlehem Steel Corporation. Shouting and singing, the miners established picket lines and heard their leaders promise that we can't afford to let the steel workers lose their strike . . . with the precision and snap of a well drilled regiment, they alighted from their automobiles and marched to the gates.

Sometimes reserves spring up quite unexpectedly. A major strike in a community often develops a "strike fever"; workers in other industries in the same community become encouraged to do something about their own

grievances and walk out on strike. During the 1937 steel strike in Mahoning Valley a number of such strikes occurred and turned out to be very helpful. In Warren, Ohio, the telephone operators struck and cut off all telephone service, except emergency calls. In Youngstown the telegraph messenger boys did likewise. Both strikes hampered the steel corporations' anti-strike activities.

In February 1949, 11,000 Philadelphia bus, trolley, subway and elevated train operators, members of the CIO Transport Workers Union, were on strike. The only available transportation in the city was taxis. The taxi drivers were members of an AFL union. Stimulated by the transport workers' strike, and taking advantage of the fact that taxis were the sole means of transportation and that this made it possible for the taxi companies to double and triple their profits while the transport strike was on, taxi drivers declared a strike of their own. Such a development was of tremendous value to both the CIO Transport Workers and the AFL taxi drivers. When such unexpected aid comes, strike leaders must not be slow to associate themselves with the smaller striking groups and give them all the attention and assistance necessary.

A great reserve, often underestimated, are the women-folk of the strikers. In recent years, a number of AFL and CIO unions have learned to appreciate the important role women can play. The miners' wives are famous for their past militancy and endurance during strikes. The wives of automobile workers are developing a similar tradition. During a grave hour in the Flint sit-down strike, when the City Manager announced in the press that the police force would "go to the plant shooting," they formed a Women's Emergency Brigade of 500 and marched down to the

plant to protect their men from violence. "This demonstration was unique in the history of labor," writes Mary Heaton Vorse. "The women marched and marched, their banners and caps brightening the crowd." (*Labor's New Millions.*) When the Ladies' Auxiliaries in Lansing, Toledo, Bay City, and Pontiac heard of what was happening in Flint, they left their kitchens and hurried to Flint. In the Ford strike, the womenfolk were on the picket line and served 45,000 meals a day. The Transport Workers Union at one time developed a fine Auxiliary, and in one of the New York bus strikes the women were very outstanding. Other unions, and especially AFL unions, will do well to follow these examples.

Not only the women but the children of the strikers must not be neglected. They must be told why their fathers are on strike so that they will be proud of it. Mary Heaton Vorse tells how during the 1937 steel strike in Indiana Harbor, every Saturday was a children's day, the children being encouraged to make up their own slogans and paint them. She found one little fellow printing the sign: "We Are Uman Beans!"

### *Dramatizing the Strike*

Skillful dramatization is an important part of fighting on the offensive because human beings respond so readily to drama. When the dramatic character of the strike is pointed up, it catches the imagination of the strikers. The public, too, gets the workers' version of the struggle, is moved by it, and often, as a result, ignores company propaganda.

The picket line offers excellent opportunities for drama-



tization. Realizing that the strength of a picket line is not only in numbers, strike leaders should be alive to these opportunities. The banners should express the grievances and aspirations of the workers. They should tell the story of the strikers. And they should do it in a way that both attracts the public and wins its sympathy and support. The United Department Store Employees during one of their strikes in New York carried signs with drawings of Lincoln and with his famous remark: "Thank God We Have a Country Where Working Men Have the Right to Strike."

Local 1224 of the United Electrical and Radio Workers made a hit when they dressed up a couple of pickets as Santa Claus during hot July days. A picture of the pickets was printed in dozens of newspapers. The *New York Times* carried the picture and the following story:

Santa Claus appeared in the picket lines yesterday. Nearly 250 striking electrical workers adopted this novel anachronism when they picketed the offices of several electrical companies, in support of their demands for union recognition, higher wages and improved working conditions. Led by two members sweltering in whiskers, red flannels and boots of St. Nicholas, the pickets, who chanted a parody on "Jingle Bells" embodying their demands, explained that the Christmas atmosphere had been inspired by the Christmas tree ornaments manufactured by one of the concerns.

The AFL Electrical Union Local 3 in New York produced a very fine example of methods of dramatizing a strike. The leader, Harry Van Arsdale, staged a "blackout" of the Great White Way, the world-famous theatrical center of New York. The newspapers, the radio, and movie cameras covered the "blackout." Next day, the *New York Times* described this dramatic action as follows:

For half an hour last night, the fish didn't swim in the Wrigley sign in Times Square; Fred Astaire and Rita Hayworth vanished



from the illuminated square on which their likenesses danced for the greater glory of Wilson whiskey, and the coffee in the magnified Silex bubbled no more, although steam forlornly hissed from it. The "blackout" ordered by Electrical Workers Union Local 3 was far from absolute, but it did end effectively the glare from the major "spectaculars" in the theatre district.

It was a very small and relatively unimportant strike, but millions of Americans heard about it.

Shipyard workers in Kearny, N. J., in reply to a newspaper attack that they were hindering national defense, adopted the letter V as *their symbol*. The AFL Chefs and Cooks Union Local 89 organized a mass picket line of Broadway chorus girls in front of the Brass Rail Restaurant on strike. This union, under the able leadership of Harry Reich, produced many fine examples in dramatizing strikes in a service industry.

As it does on a number of other aspects of strike strategy, the 1949 Western Union strike offers a fine example of dramatization. A special day was set aside to bring to the picket line an array of talent that Western Union's money could not buy. Show people, writers and artists, men and women famous on Broadway and known to millions of Americans, joined the picket line. Among them were: Milt Winne, author of *Why I Hate the Nazis*; Mike Gordon, director of *Home of the Brave*; Philip Evergood, one of America's most prominent artists; Bob Newman, Vice President, Radio Writers Guild; Hugo Gellert, internationally known artist; Howard Fast, famous novelist; Fred O'Neil and ten other members of the cast of *Anna Lucasta*; Richard Huey, baritone star of *Bloomer Girl*; Diana Andrews of *Are You With It*; David Burns of *Billion Dollar Baby*; Martin Wilson of *Deep Are the Roots*.

No wonder the union paper was able to announce that

"If you want to see the best talent New York has to offer, and the best show in town, you don't have to plunk down \$4.40 or \$6.60 for a seat. In fact, there are no seats. Just come and picket on the Western Union picket line."

Parades of wives pushing their babies in carriages, the establishing of army tents in front of a mill, airplane distribution of union leaflets, a nice picket line at the homes of the scabs and even the boss—it is this kind of ingenuity and technique that dramatizes a strike, wins sympathy and becomes "the talk of the town."

Dramatization must also be applied in the struggle against police or company terror; in raising funds for the strikers; in the exposure of workers' poverty; in public investigations; in mass violation of injunctions, etc.

The principle of fighting on the offensive must be uppermost in the minds of the strike leaders. This means being alive not only to the movements of the enemy, but also to every opportunity of building morale and winning sympathy and support for the strike.

## Public Support

### *Labor Has Allies*

THERE was a time when public support of a strike was limited to other unions. It was rare for a mayor or congressman, for a writer or actor to come out openly in support of men on strike. Times have changed. And there is every reason to believe that as the trade union movement continues to grow and develop stature in American life, public support of strikes will continue to increase.

To begin with, a great many professional people are learning that they, too, are wage earners. Some of the best known Hollywood movie stars, many outstanding newspapermen, artists and scientists—whose influence on general thinking is not to be minimized—carry union books: they know that the gains of labor are their gains, too. This same realization is being borne in on large sections of the middle class—the storekeepers, the doctors, the lawyers, the dentists, the beauty parlor operators, the motion pic-

ture theater owners, and many others. They are becoming increasingly aware that they benefit from an increase in the buying power of the workers. The veterans' organizations, too, which two or three decades ago were openly hostile to labor unions and often played a strikebreaking role, have adopted a more sympathetic approach to labor. And there has been a basic change in attitude on the part of some church leaders.

Moreover, the growing role of organized labor in the political field promises greater public support. The results of the 1948 elections, when some 80 congressmen who had supported the Taft-Hartley law were defeated, will not quickly be forgotten. This major victory was achieved almost exclusively by the labor movement, and many public officeholders will think twice before they align themselves on the side of the employers in time of strike.

Conditions exist today for widespread supporting movements in time of strike. It is wrong to take for granted that the mayor of the town, the congressmen, the city council, the legion post or the priest cannot be won over in support of a strike. All of them are subject to pressures. Whichever side exerts greater pressures stands the better chance of winning support. To be sure, the employers have the heavy guns on their side. But in part the reason for it is that they are generally much more awake to the importance of winning allies. This is not to minimize the terrific economic, political and social pressure a large corporation can exert in a community; employers and company managers are large contributors to local churches, company personnel is strongly represented in the leadership of veterans' organizations, in the Eagles, Lions and Elks, in the YMCA and YWCA. Notwithstanding, public support of the enemy



side is not a foregone conclusion. There is nothing automatic about it. Public support must be fought for and won.

In a sense organized labor must compete for it and no strike strategy can be complete without a well conceived plan toward that end. The task cannot be left in unskilled hands. Nor can it wait until the battle has begun. One of the ablest organizers must be assigned to this public relations task long before the strike, so that he will have ample time to work out an effective and all-embracing plan.

### *How UE Reached the People*

The way UE was able to mobilize public support during its crucial strike struggles, particularly against such powerful corporations as General Electric, Westinghouse and General Motors, can serve as a shining example.

It was in the cold winter of 1946 that the UE engaged in its first post-war battle for survival. Some 200,000 UE workers in 79 plants spreading from coast to coast struck for a wage increase. The giant corporations in the electrical industry had thrown in everything they could to destroy, or at least weaken, this powerful union. But the union threw in everything it had, too, and the battle lasted 119 days. In a pictorial history devoted to this gallant strike the UE wrote: "The fight to preserve our union and win a living wage wasn't easily won. Picketing in sub-zero weather, day after day and month after month with no pay coming in, is not easy. Fighting such powerful and fabulously wealthy companies as G. E. or Westinghouse or G. M. is not easy either. But we took all they had and still came back for more. We kept fighting from that early morning in January when the strike started to the last day

in May when the strike ended. Men and women, young and old. Even the kids were on the picket line." (*UE Fights for a Better America.*)

It was in this great strike that the UE proved that public support can be won. Fully conscious of the need to mobilize the strike-bound communities in support of the strike ahead of time, even before the strike began the union made this significant declaration: "All fair-minded people within our communities will join with us when they understand how the companies' pinch-penny policies are injuring the entire community."

Then the union leaders began to operate on individual groups and people. As a result, Bloomfield, N. J., a town with a population of 65,000, came out almost solid behind the 8,000 UE workers in the General Electric and Westinghouse plants. The mayor of the Town, John A. Reed, actively supported the strike. Addressing a town rally in support of the workers, he told the men: "Your case is just." He instructed the police to put away their nightsticks for the duration. The merchants proved their loyalty to the workers. One restaurant served 120 strikers. When a newspaper reporter asked the owner why he did it, "Why shouldn't I help?" he replied, "These are my customers." A meat market proprietor who supplied free frankfurters said: "I have no stock in GE except in the workers." A barber shop set aside from 1 to 4 P.M. daily for giving free hair cuts to strikers. A bakery supplied rolls and a vegetable market gave potatoes and onions. In one form or another the whole town contributed toward the support of the strike.

What was accomplished in Bloomfield, N. J., was repeated in many other communities. In Lynn, Mass., Mayor

Albert Cole wrote the companies urging that union demands be met. In the same town the merchants contributed \$3,000 during the first days of the strike. The town Community Fund made funds available to all needy cases. Druggists set aside medicinal supplies for emergencies. Three of the biggest bakeries donated thousands of loaves of bread and pastry to the union kitchen, and the local dance orchestras donated their services. In Essington, Pa., a Citizens Committee consisting of small businessmen and farmers declared: "We feel that the unions are working in the best interests of the national economy in their efforts to maintain the country's pay envelopes." Official support for UE strikers was voted by city governments and city and town councils from scores of communities. Among city governments to vote support for GE and Westinghouse strikers were: Mansfield, Ohio; Pittsburgh, Pa.; Taunton, Mass.; Newark, N. J.; Pittsfield, Mass.; Bridgeport, Conn.; Ontario, Calif.; Fort Wayne, Indiana; Lynn, Mass.; Cleveland, Ohio; Springfield, Mass.; Fairmont, West Va.; Salem, Mass.; Rotterdam, N. Y.

Even more significant was the ability of the strike leaders to enlist 55 U. S. Senators and Congressmen to make a special public statement declaring: "UE strikers deserve full moral and financial support in their grim struggle for a substantial wage increase and for a decent American standard of living. . . ."

With each passing strike the UE is adding to its fine record of ability to rally public support. During the 1949 Singer Sewing Machine strike in Elizabeth, N. J., the union reached out into the community and nearby towns to explain to the people why the Singer workers were striking. Street meetings were held in Elizabeth so that the



neighbors of the strikers could be told how the speed-up, in that it resulted in lay-offs and declining earnings, endangered the entire community. As in previous UE strikes, the union enlisted the support of the Mayor of Elizabeth and the nearby towns of Winfield and Linden. The mayors of these three towns issued proclamations to the citizens appealing for support to the strike during tag days arranged by the union. Mayor J. Richard Brendel of Winfield, N. J., himself joined the picket line and in a public statement declared that "the demands of the strikers for better working conditions and increased compensation are in the best interests of everyone." He then further declared that the "responsibility for this prolonged hardship to the families of the strikers is that of the Singer Manufacturing Company."

The UE is not the only union that has succeeded in mobilizing public support on the side of the strikers. In the 1946 steel strike the town of Clairton, Pa., made labor history when the city council authorized a \$50,000 loan for an emergency relief fund for the town's 4,500 steel workers and their families. The Mayor of the town was John J. Mullen, who was also local organizer of the United Steelworkers. The money was distributed to the strikers in the form of certificates to buy food, clothing and other necessities. The New York newspaper *PM*, reporting on this new type of public support to strikers, wrote: "This was a bitter pill indeed for the Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corp., whose Clairton works is the biggest coke and by-products plant in the world. The company is the city's main source of tax revenue, paying approximately 60% of all taxes collected." (*PM*, January 28, 1946.)



## *The Story of Reverend Jones*

The experience of several unions shows that it is possible to win to the side of the strikers the support of church organizations and clergymen. They, of course, are under tremendous pressure from the employers. Many an anti-labor and anti-strike pronouncement has been made from the pulpit, and on many a Sunday morning people who instinctively felt sympathetic to the strike have been misguided. How little scruple the employers have in pressuring clergymen to influence their congregations against a union or a strike is amply illustrated by the case of Rev. Orville C. Jones.

Reverend Jones was the Pastor of the Plymouth Congregational Church in Youngstown when the CIO came to town. He had great understanding of, and sympathy for, the steel workers. He felt it would be better if the steel industry was organized. Because he held such views, top steel officials withdrew their financial support. What happened to the good reverend? The answer can be found in the Hearings of the La Follette Senate Civil Liberties Committee.

*Senator La Follette.* Reverend Jones, you said you left the church in December of 1937?

*Mr. Jones.* Yes.

*Senator La Follette.* Did you leave by request or of your own volition?

*Mr. Jones.* I resigned. I thought that in view of the general antagonism among the steel people to me it would be better for the church if I withdrew.

Reverend Jones told the Senate Committee honestly and candidly that powerful corporations can and do exert

pressure on the Church. Senator La Follette asked in what form. The rest follows:

*Mr. Jones.* One family associated with the Sheet and Tube dropped out. I sent a representative to find out why and the representative was told that this man's boss had informed the man that it would be inadvisable, if he wished to continue his job, to continue attending my church.

*Senator La Follette.* Who was that?

*Mr. Jones.* I would rather not give the name unless it is necessary.

*Senator La Follette.* You mean you are afraid he might lose his job?

*Mr. Jones.* I think it would be possible.

*Mr. Purnell.* Senator, I will guarantee that he won't lose his job. I suggest that his name be given.

*Senator La Follette.* I will accept your guarantee if the minister will.

*Mr. Purnell.* I will certainly guarantee it.

*Mr. Jones.* The man's name was Smith. (Laughter)

*Senator La Follette.* Order, please, what was Mr. Smith's position with the company?

*Mr. Jones.* I think he was in the metallurgical department.

*Senator La Follette.* What was his first name?

*Mr. Jones.* Harry.

*Senator La Follette.* Did anything else happen that indicated any displeasure on the part of anybody?

*Mr. Jones.* Immediately after my discussion with Mr. Gillies I began to feel considerable pressure from people who were related in one way or another to the officials of the Sheet & Tube. The wife of one official started the story that I had gone into the mill and called the men from their work and urged them to join the CIO.

*Senator La Follette.* Who was that?

*Mr. Jones.* Mrs. Thullen.

*Senator La Follette.* Anything else of a similar nature?

*Mr. Jones.* She incited another woman who was a member of the church council to make an attack on me in the church board, at the next meeting of the church board. This woman charged in the church board that I had been very discourteous, and that Dr. Batman had said that I had been discourteous. In the meantime, two other women heard of her visit there and went to see

Dr. Batman. He denied making any such charge and said that I had been perfectly within my rights and they faced this woman with that and, of course, there was considerable heat and not much light.

*Senator La Follette.* Anything else of a similar nature?

*Mr. Jones.* As far as the church is concerned it is a matter of subtle pressure all the time because the steel workers aren't paid enough, especially in times of depression, to support a church and the churches are dependent on the officials largely for financial support, and they steadily withdraw their support from anyone whose views they disagree with, and apparently influence others, friends, to do likewise. It is a perfectly natural and simple thing and yet it amounts to an effective coercion, which means that the ministers of the city do not express independent judgment.

*Senator La Follette.* Did your church have any loss of financial support in this period?

*Mr. Jones.* I expect about 10 families.

*Senator La Follette.* Name them.

*Mr. Jones.* Well, Mr. Purnell withdrew his support and membership for one. The Thullens. Then Mr. Harry Smith and other members of his family. The Parmenters, who were close friends of Mrs. Thullen, and several others.

### *Winning Church Support*

Such are the pressures. However, it is by no means true that the possibility of developing strong church support in time of strike is to be eliminated. During the heat of battle in the "Little Steel" strike of 1937 over one hundred prominent clergymen of many denominations, residing in various States and cities, issued an appeal for a settlement of the strike based on the principles of organized labor relations "with signed agreements." Their appeal called attention to the long-standing pronouncements of all faiths favoring the right of collective bargaining. Those who signed this appeal included: Monsignor Joseph F. Smith, Vicar General of the Cleveland Diocese; Monsignor John

A. Ryan, Washington, D. C.; Rev. Edgar De Witt Jones, President, Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America; Rt. Rev. Benjamin Brewster, Bishop of Portland, Maine; Rabbi Max Currick, President, Central Conference American Rabbis, Erie, Pa.; Rev. W. T. Clemons, Secretary, New York State Council of Churches; and many other outstanding church leaders in the nation.

In the spring of 1941, when the Ford workers were engaged in their decisive strike, the press all over the nation accused the union of a "conspiracy to block rearmament." The New York East Conference of the Methodist Church came out fully in support of the workers. Its resolution stated: "Familiarity with labor problems from month to month in recent years cuts away the ground from the charge that the present labor situation amounts to a conspiracy to block the effective rearmament of this nation. . . . It ought to be obvious that we cannot defend democracy by abolishing it. Democracy in terms of structure means a society in which basic freedom of speech, press, assembly and worship are maintained in harmony with equality of opportunity." (*PM*, May 20, 1941.)

During the 1948 packing house strike, in protest against the murder of a striker, a group of ministers joined the picket line. They carried signs with these words: "The cause of justice is the cause of Christ" and "Any resort to violence is a confession of weakness."

### *Winning the Farmers and Veterans*

Unlike the story in the past, farmers and their organizations can be rallied to support workers on strike; unions that have made such efforts have met warm response on



the part of farmers' organizations. During the 1946 Schenectady and the 1947 Remington Rand strike in Illion, N. Y., the UE was successful in enlisting the support of the farmers' union. One day in Schenectady a delegation of farmers brought a live cow to the strikers' kitchen. A year later the farmers' unions of Otsego County made a similar contribution to the Illion strikers. In their letter to the strikers they wrote: "If we are to get a decent price for our products, it can only come as a result of industrial people receiving good wages and having a decent standard of living. It is the workingmen who make up the market and who buy our products."

The old-time antagonism between farmers and workers—fostered by enemies of both groups—is breaking down. Farmers today are themselves increasingly union-conscious, many of them having at one time or another worked in industry. Getting the support of farming communities will deprive the employers of a force that in the past was used against strikers. But here, again, such support will not come by itself; it must be solicited.

In the battle for public support of the veterans' organizations, unions will run up against stiff competition from the employers, who have always recognized the key importance of that support. They have consistently endeavored to enlist it, and after World War I were successful in turning the American Legion against organized labor. Since then their pressures have been less successful—at the local level—because there has been a shift in veterans' attitude. In the thirties, when the labor unions embraced new millions of wage earners, including veterans, the organizations of ex-servicemen began to lean more toward neutrality in labor disputes. In 1937, during

the steel strike, the American Legion's national headquarters announced that Legionnaires doing strike duty under police command are acting "as citizens and not Legionnaires." Harry W. Colmery, then national commander, announced in a press statement that the Legion's policy is one of "strict neutrality." He made it very emphatic that "The American Legion is not a strikebreaking organization." (UP dispatch, June 17, 1937.)

Today, the possibility of winning veterans' support of a strike is greater than ever. Since World War II, the veterans' organizations have given indication of something more than "neutrality." Part of the reason is that after the war millions of workers joined the veterans' organizations. A large section of these worker-veterans are union members, and in many industrial communities they constitute a majority in their organizations. The growing participation of ex-servicemen in strikes is an indication that the active support of their organizations can be won on a large scale. In some post-war strikes local veterans' posts have declared themselves on the side of labor. In the 1946 UE strike the commander of the Legion Post in Bloomfield, N. J., sided with the union and the strike. In Lynn, Mass., during the same strike, one of the Legion Posts made an unsolicited financial contribution to the strikers.

How effective veteran participation can be was demonstrated in the Western Union strike which rallied a large number of worker-veterans. Their influence was particularly felt on the picket line. In describing their role the union paper wrote: "Four abreast, a thousand strong, veterans of the Battle of the Bulge and the Solomons, GI's and sailors, paratroopers, Wacs, men from the tanks and the air corps and the merchant marine marched on the

Western Union picket line and held that line against 300 mounted police." (*ACA News*, Jan. 31, 1946.) The veterans were of tremendous help in preventing the police from breaking up mass picketing.

The potentialities for winning the support of veterans' organizations are great. Union and strike leaders must work for it.

### *Don't Write Off the Press*

To win the support of the press is perhaps the most difficult of all. The average American newspaper is seldom on the side of labor. A great many newspapers don't even pretend to be neutral. Their editorials, cartoons, many columnists and the slanting of the news are anti-labor and anti-strike. From this, however, one must not conclude that the press and radio must be written off as possible sources of public support. Experience has shown that at least individual columnists and commentators can be moved to side with the strike and that even when the local newspaper or radio station is strongly anti-union, pressure can be exerted to at least curtail or limit their anti-union propaganda.

During the 1937 "Little Steel" strike the press of the nation was almost solidly against the CIO, yet a number of outstanding and nationally known columnists condemned Tom Girdler's stand against signed contracts and for financing and organizing violence. Walter Lippmann wrote that "it is reactionary to wage the kind of fight these independent steel companies are waging. . . . In Mr. Girdler's policy he can look forward only to fighting on the picket lines." Raymond Clapper, famous Washington



columnist, in discussing the strike in Scripps-Howard papers, wrote: "Girdler and his colleagues don't seem to give a damn about anybody else. They won't sign any agreement with organized labor. Thus, sabotaging all collective bargaining effort, they precipitate bloody warfare which is causing destruction of life and property and is demoralizing whole communities." Such statements from such prominent newspapermen were of considerable importance in breaking through a hostile press and helping develop public opinion on the side of the strikers.

It can be done. During the Western Union strike a special press committee was set up. The committee's main objective was to prevent, as much as possible, the press and radio from playing their usual anti-strike role. The committee visited editors, columnists and commentators. They did not accept "out to lunch" and "gone for the day" excuses. They were determined to see those responsible for newspaper policies. The committee managed to meet the editor-in-chief of the *New York Times*, who is "practically inaccessible." For an hour and a half they talked about an unfriendly editorial. The editor finally agreed that the union should submit its point of view and that it would be given six times the space of the editorial.

The *New York Herald Tribune* published an anti-strike column by the labor-hating Mark Sullivan. Result: the managing editor was visited by the press committee and promised to carry the union's answer.

When the committee visited the editor of the *New York Sun* to complain about an editorial, they were told that if they would send in letters presenting the union's point of view, these letters would be printed. The following day the *Sun's* letter page was full of union letters.



In describing these experiences the *ACA News* said that "even details were not overlooked. Jack Benny on his radio program said he just got a wire from Fred Allen. After the program, its sponsor received a call from the committee reminding him that Western Union was on strike."

A hostile attitude on the part of the public at large, or even an attitude of apathy and indifference in time of a major strike, is dangerous; for such a condition is favorable to developing an offensive against the strike. Progressive strike leaders do not permit the employers to gain and hold public support. That support rightly belongs to the men who are fighting for a better life for themselves, their families and their fellow workers.

*P A R T    T H R E E*



## Violence on the Picket Line

### *The Connection of Politics and Violence*

ONE of the most important phases of strike strategy relates to employer tactics in breaking strikes. Generally speaking, these tactics fall into three distinct classifications: violence, injunctions and the "Mohawk Valley formula"—the last emerging only in recent years and being the most comprehensive and all-embracing form of breaking strikes. A union, of course, has to be prepared to deal with all three forms. But the immediate political situation in the nation, or in individual States, has a great deal to do with which form—if any—it will have to battle at any particular time. The year 1937 will illustrate this.

In January 1937 the great General Motors sit-down strike took place. This powerful corporation was all set to unleash a flood of violence and, if need be, to tear-gas or machine-gun the workers out of the plants. The same em-



ployer was also set for legal violence, as evidenced by the demand for sweeping court injunctions and for troops to be sent into the strike-bound Michigan towns. The union did not, in this instance, have to contend with either form of violence. G. M. plans were frustrated largely because Justice Frank Murphy, then Governor of Michigan and a close collaborator of President Roosevelt, prevented such reactionary moves notwithstanding extreme pressures. The strike culminated in one of the first major CIO victories. In defending his pro-labor course in an address to the graduating class of Duquesne University the Governor declared labor's unrest was "simply an acute manifestation of labor's long struggle to protect itself . . . and to escape the haunting fear of insecurity by consolidating itself in its job. . . . Essentially the present conflict between capital and labor represents a renewed and vigorous demand by a large group of our people for new rights and new liberties." (*Youngstown Vindicator*, June 10, 1937.)

During the same year the "Little Steel" strike took place. The ruling powers in Chicago and in the State of Ohio lined up squarely on the side of the notorious Tom Girdler, head of Republic Steel. The result in Chicago was a massacre of strikers. In Ohio, where Governor Martin L. Davey took the opposite course from Governor Murphy, the result was similar—death and violence against the steel strikers.

The fact that the sit-down strike in Michigan developed under quite favorable political circumstances, while the "Little Steel" strike in Chicago and Ohio ran into the opposite political circumstances, illuminates the point of time and place and that unions and strike leaders must constantly prepare against all eventualities.

The oldest and most persistent form of strikebreaking is unadulterated violence stimulated, sponsored, planned and financed by the employers. In no country in the world have so many strikers been murdered as in the United States. Yet in most cases those directly and indirectly responsible for killing the men and women who fight for freedom's cause are never brought before the bar of justice. On the contrary, it is invariably the strikers who are accused of violence.

It is important to substantiate the long chain of murders on the picket line and to place the responsibility where it belongs. Organized labor has not yet fully and thoroughly exposed those who breed strike violence while brazenly accusing the strikers of such crimes. And it has an obligation to do so—not only to the dead but to the living. To fail to do so is to play into the hands of the enemy. For the future of labor depends to no small extent on labor's ability to prove beyond the possibility of doubt that force and violence are the customary weapon employers use to break strikes and destroy unions. Every approach to anti-labor legislation has been predicated on the theory that labor indulges in force and violence. What arguments are presented when bills are introduced to limit picket lines if not force and violence? On what grounds do employers demand injunctions if not force and violence? Even the arguments against the closed shop are based on the so-called application of "force" against the "individual liberty" of the workers.

It is a grim picture that emerges as we piece together the historic incidents of violence in the labor battles, past and present—a picture of simple people fighting for a decent life for themselves, their families, their fellow

workers and meeting with force and brutal violence at every step. The rank and file in the labor movement and even the labor leaders themselves do not know the whole story. Perhaps that is why labor has been so remiss in placing the blame for violence where it belongs. But labor may not remain in ignorance. Strike strategy that will effectively counter employer force and violence must rest first of all on a knowledge of the facts.

### *1877—100 Dead in "Railroad Uprising"*

The Civil War was over. Under Abraham Lincoln's leadership the system of slavery had been defeated in battle, the period of reconstruction and rapid industrialization of the nation had been set in motion. And now, while the slaveowners were on their way out, there appeared on the scene a new and ruthless class of industrial magnates. Among them the heads of the railroads were riding roughshod over their workers and over the farmers whose land they had practically stolen. The Vanderbilts of that day were as hated as the Garys in the twenties and the Girdlers in the thirties.

The railroad workers bore the brunt of the exploitation. Suffering from starvation; working only part time; slaving away from 15 to 18 hours a day; making less than \$10 a week for 70 to 80 hours of work; resentful of being subject to call although not working a full week; irked by not receiving their meager pay regularly; often deprived of railroad passes; resentful of employer hostility to any form of organization—the railroad workers were now asked to accept a drastic wage cut. Such were the conditions and such the immediate grievance that brought on the "rail-



road uprising" of 1877. The battle was inevitable. All it needed was a start somehow, somewhere. Despite intimidation, lack of organization and leadership, despite the severe unemployment in the country, the railroad workers rebelled.

The historic labor revolt started when forty firemen and brakemen on the B & O railroad in Baltimore refused to work and stopped freight trains from moving on the day the wage cut went into effect. This small, brave group of workmen were immediately dispersed and replaced.

Without advance knowledge of what was happening in Baltimore, an even smaller group of firemen at Martinsburg, West Virginia, quit working. The news spread, and their action was greeted with enthusiasm. Unlike Baltimore, the people of the town rallied speedily in support of the strikers. When the Mayor arrested the strike leaders, the people forced their release. When the Mayor attempted to move the trains with scabs, the people stopped it. Within a few hours the strike spread. The railroad asked for the militia and the Governor obliged by sending in two companies. A miracle happened—the militia refused to open fire and instead fraternized with the strikers. "Angered by this disobedience, Governor Matthews set out personally from Wheeling at the head of two more companies of militia, but he abandoned them at Grafton because of the hostility of the citizens. Everywhere along the line the people were completely in sympathy with the strikers, nor could the troops be depended upon to act against them." (Samuel Yellen, *American Labor Struggles*.) The *Baltimore Sun* had to admit that "There is no disguising the fact that the strikers in all their lawful acts have the fullest sympathy of the community."



The strike spread to Wheeling and other railroad centers in West Virginia. The state militia could no longer be counted upon to break the strike. For the first time in the history of the nation a President of the United States was called upon to send federal troops to crush the strike. President Hayes dispatched 400 U. S. soldiers who dispersed the strikers at bayonet point, arrested their leaders, commandeered the trains, and opened the road.

Considering the lack of organization, the entrance of federal troops for the first time into a strike situation should have been a blow sufficient to prevent the further spreading of the strike. But this was not the case. Railroad workers walked out at Cumberland and Newark, Ohio. The Maryland Governor took no more chances in calling out the local militia. Instead, he ordered a Baltimore regiment to proceed to Cumberland. The workers and unemployed of Baltimore poured out on the streets and attempted to prevent the troops from leaving the city. The militiamen fired straight at the crowd, and when the battle was over, 10 were dead on the streets. Aroused by such outright murder, the working population of Baltimore were in a state of revolt. For three days the rioting continued, and only on Monday, July 23, was an armed peace established. Telling the story of this strike in his *American Labor Struggles*, Samuel Yellen says: "Baltimore was a military camp . . . where 700 soldiers guarded the company property with two Gatling guns and several field pieces. The total casualties of the affrays were 13 killed and about 50 wounded."

During the same week in Pittsburgh, 500 B & O workers joined the strike. What happened in Martinsburg was repeated in Pittsburgh. The Governor of Pennsylvania or-

dered the Sixth Division of the militia for strike duty. The militiamen refused to become strikebreakers or murderers; instead, they fraternized with the railroad workers. The Governor ordered 1,000 troops from Philadelphia, including artillery. Upon arrival in Pittsburgh, they proceeded to "disperse" the strikers. Within a few hours 20 persons were killed and 29 wounded, including three small children and a woman. As in Baltimore, the people of Pittsburgh were aroused. They congregated by the thousands, armed themselves, and forced the Philadelphia troops to retreat to the Pennsylvania roundhouse. In the battle another 20 workers were killed. The railroad rebellion spread to Altoona, Easton, Harrisburg, Reading, Johnstown, Bethlehem and Philadelphia. President Hayes appointed General Hancock to take charge of 3,000 U. S. soldiers to crush the strike. In Reading 10 were killed and 40 wounded and a number of workers were shot in Johnstown. More troop reinforcements were needed. The strike spread to Buffalo. The city was turned, Yellen says, into an armed camp "with 1,600 militiamen, the regular police force, 1,800 veterans of the Grand Army of the Republic, and 300 citizen volunteers. In the street clashes eight soldiers were wounded and an equal number of workmen killed."

The strike continued to spread to Chicago, to St. Louis and westward. With it the number of dead and wounded continued to mount. In Chicago thousands of workers in shops and factories joined their railroad brothers in sympathy strikes. A demonstration of 8,000 workers was fired upon, with three workers killed and seven wounded. Two days later 10,000 Chicago workers assembled for a demonstration at the Halstead Street Viaduct. Yellen writes that

"Soldiers and mounted police arrived, with orders to make every shot tell. At least 12 workers were killed, and fully 100 leaders arrested. The city was patrolled by six companies of the Twenty-second Regular Infantry, the entire Ninth Regular, two regiments of State militia, a battery of artillery, several companies of cavalry, 5,000 special deputies, 500 veteran soldiers, and members of various patriotic organizations. . . . Each day additional federal troops returned from the Indian wars and marched into the city. In the street fighting, between 30 and 50 men and women were killed and about 100 wounded. On July 28 the first freight train was sent east under military protection."

The railroad strike was broken. Between July 16 and August 1, 1877, over 100 workingmen lost their lives in a fight against a wage cut, against brutal employers, and against a federal administration that sent the country's armed forces to shoot and kill its own citizens. The era of violence against strikers was ushered in and legalized by the federal and State governments.

Who was responsible for the bloodshed? Then, as now, while the strikers were subjected to extreme violence, while they lay dead on the streets of many cities, it was the strikers who were accused of violence. Samuel Yellen found that in a single issue—July 26, 1877—the *New York Times* referred to the railroad strikers in the following terms: "disaffected elements, roughs, hoodlums, rioters, mob, suspicious looking individuals, bad characters, thieves, blacklegs, looters, communists, rabble, labor-reform agitators, dangerous class of people, gangs, tramps, drunken section-men, law breakers, threatening crowd, bummers, ruffians, loafers, bullies, vagabonds, cowardly mobs, bands of worthless fellows, incendiaries, enemies



of society, reckless crowd, malcontents, wretched people, loud-mouthed orators, rascallions, brigands, robber mob, riffraff, terrible fellows, felons, idiots." All this and more because the railroad workers fought against William H. Vanderbilt and other railroad magnates who imposed unendurable wage scales and unendurable working conditions. All this against men, women, and children who were mowed down and bayoneted upon orders of a President of the United States.

### *The Battle of "Fort Frick"—1892*

Between the Railroad Uprising and the next mass murder, 15 years passed. In 1892 the two opposing forces clashed again, this time in the most basic industry of the country—steel.

The labor movement of that day was fully cognizant of the importance of the Homestead strike; for the outcome of that struggle with Carnegie Steel would influence the course of American trade unionism for a period of several decades. Both organized and unorganized workers throughout the nation responded with spontaneous sympathy, as did thousands of liberal-minded citizens. No strike up to that time received so much financial support as Homestead did. In many industrial centers labor unions set aside special days when workmen contributed a dollar. In Chicago alone in one day twenty thousand artisans and workers made such a contribution. Moral and material support came from England, Ireland, France, Germany and other lands. Homestead was a preview of things to come when labor made its first effort to challenge the cruel exploitation by the emerging monopolies and trusts.



Homestead, Pa., was one of the few key steel centers where the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers had gained a foothold among the skilled workers. This outpost of organized labor in the most important plant of the Carnegie Steel Corporation, where the union had secured a wage scale contract, had to be crushed before it spread to other steel centers.

H. C. Frick was the chairman of the company. He was also one of the wealthiest coke operators in the country. He was a ruthless employer with a consuming hatred for labor unions. In 1889 he smashed a union and a strike of coke workers in the Connellsville region. Mr. Frick directly planned, plotted and schemed for a showdown in Homestead. He insisted that the Amalgamated accept a reduction in wage scales. He demanded a change in the date of expiration of the contract from June to December, making it more difficult for the men to strike in the cold of winter. While pretending to negotiate with the union, the company made preparations, both visible and secret, for the showdown. Enormous fences were erected around the plants, stockades were built, and powerful floodlights were installed. The employees renamed the plant "Fort Frick." There was no longer any doubt that this was it.

The first blow came two days before the expiration of the contract—the workers were locked out. There was no alternative but to accept the challenge. Fortunately, the 3,000 unskilled non-union workers joined the 800 skilled Amalgamated members and the battle was on.

Unlike the railroad operators, who relied on the armed forces to break the strike, H. C. Frick turned to the Pinkerton agency to do the job. A congressional committee to investigate the strike established that, long before the

negotiations broke down, Carnegie asked the notorious Pinkerton brothers to assemble 312 professional strike-breakers and thugs, and to purchase 250 rifles, 300 pistols and large quantities of ammunition.

The Strikers' Advisory Committee assumed high command, and its leader, Hugh O'Donnell, lost no time in preparing the strikers to meet the crisis. From all accounts the strike was blessed with an able and determined leadership. One of the members of the Advisory Committee was John McLuckie, the burgess of Homestead. Homestead being a town of steel workers and their families, the Advisory Committee, with the help of the burgess, practically took over the town. Guards of strikers were posted around the plants, in the town, and on the highways and along the banks of the river. Headquarters and a signaling system were set up. At the same time the Advisory Committee offered the county sheriff from 100 to 500 strikers as special deputies. Of course, the offer was rejected.

H. C. Frick proceeded with his plan. The Pinkertons gathered secretly in Youngstown. From there they were to embark in two barges. Under cover of darkness they were to arrive in Homestead and in a surprise move occupy the mills and nearby territory.

But neither Frick nor the Pinkertons properly estimated the vigilance of the strikers. Myron R. Stowell, in his book "*Fort Frick*" or *the Siege of Homestead* dramatically tells the story of what happened. As the barges approached Homestead they were spotted by scouts. Men on horses galloped to Homestead and sounded the alarm. "The effect was electrical. It is impossible to comprehend the wild-fire-like rapidity with which the intelligence was communicated to everyone in the borough, much less to

understand by what facility the news spread. The town was instantly in an uproar. The preconcerted signal, blasts from the electric light plant whistle, filled the air with hoarse, ominous shrieks. Humanity began to pour from houses and buildings all over the town. Men, women and children who but an instant before had been in sound sleep, thronged into the streets like panic-stricken sheep. Then the men began to shout: 'On to the river!' 'To the River!' 'The scabs are coming!' 'Don't let the black sheep land!' "

The strikebreaking flotilla reached its destination. Thousands of grim men and women were there to meet them. A gangplank was thrown out and soon afterward some fifty Pinkerton men, each with a Winchester repeater, lined up to go ashore. Someone from the crowd yelled out, "Don't step off that boat!" In reply a shot came from the boat, followed by a loud command: "Forward!" The Pinkertons raised their rifles, and in a split second some fifty bullets were hurled into the crowd. "A wild scramble for shelter followed. Up the steep bank into the mill yard and down the river toward the waterworks they hurried for their lives. All this time, however, the Pinkertons kept up a rattling fire, which was briskly returned by about two hundred of the millworkers, some of whom stood their ground, while others had retreated to the mill yard at the top of the bank, gaining protection behind piles of steel billets."

The Pinkertons made a hasty retreat. Firing had ceased. Two of the strikers were dead and a third wounded. A conference between strike leaders and the leader of the Pinkertons followed. "On behalf of 5,000 men," said the



steel worker, "I beg of you to leave here at once. I don't know who you are nor whence you came, but I do know you have no business here, and if you remain there will be more bloodshed. We, the workers in these mills, are peaceably inclined. We have not damaged any property and we do not intend to. If you will send a committee with us we will take them through the works, carefully explain to them all the details of this trouble and promise them a safe return to their boats. But in the name of God and humanity don't attempt to land! Don't attempt to enter these works by force!"

The Pinkerton leader, leaning on his rifle, gave his answer in clear and precise words: "Men, we are Pinkerton detectives. We were sent here to take possession of this property and to guard it for the company . . . We are determined to go up there and shall do so. If you men don't withdraw, we will mow every one of you down and enter in spite of you. You had better disperse, for land we will!" The strike leader looked at the Pinkertons and after a moment of silence declared: "I have no more to say. What you do here is at the risk of many lives. Before you enter those mills you will trample over the dead bodies of 3,000 honest workingmen."

The strikers were determined that the scabs should not pass. They were aware of the character of the Pinkertons. Besides, two of their fellow workers were already dead. Hastily the strikers armed themselves. They even secured a small cannon, set up steel barricades, and took other measures to prevent the gang of murderers from entering Homestead. For hours the battle raged. The strikers finally set fire to the barges. A white flag was hoisted. The Pinker-



tons surrendered. They were disarmed and marched up the hill. Seven strikers and three Pinkertons lay dead and many strikers wounded.

For almost five months the ranks of the strikers were solid. The final blow came when Governor Pattison of Pennsylvania under great pressure gave in and sent troops to take over Homestead. Then the strike broke. Organized labor in the steel industry was routed.

Would there have been violence in Homestead had H. C. Frick not brought in the Pinkertons? We have an authoritative answer to this question. Governor Pattison in a press interview declared: "I am of the opinion that there would not have been a drop of blood shed if the proposition had been accepted to let the locked-out men guard the premises."

The steel workers have never forgotten the Homestead strike. Forty-four years later, during the early days of the CIO organizing drive, in June 1936, 4,000 steel workers attended a "Homestead Memorial Meeting." This gathering honored the memory of those who had fallen in the battle of "Fort Frick." Among those gathered were a few aged steel workers who participated in that strike. There were the children and grandchildren of the honored labor martyrs. The meeting adopted a new Declaration of Independence. It proclaimed: "Through this union we shall win higher wages, shorter hours, and a better standard of living. We shall win leisure for ourselves, and opportunity for our children. Together with our union brothers in other industries, we shall abolish industrial despotism. We shall make real the dreams of the pioneers who pictured America as a land where all might live in comfort and happiness. In support of this declaration, we mutually pledge to each

other our steadfast purpose as union men, our honor and our very lives."

### *The Ludlow Massacre—1914*

Twenty-one years pass. It is now the year 1913. The scene of battle is the Trinidad region, east of the Rocky Mountains, in the Southern Colorado coal fields.

In an isolated section of the state, the Rockefeller-controlled Colorado Fuel and Iron Company ruled supreme. The miners and their families lived under a system of political, economic and social oppression. It would be a gross exaggeration to refer to the Colorado coal miners of that day as free wage earners. They were really subjects of absentee owners who knew little, and cared less, about the operations of their mines. So long as the rate of profit was satisfactory, everything was all right.

In every way, the miners were at the mercy of the company. They were forced to live in company-owned houses, to trade in company-owned stores. When sick or suffering from accidents, only the company-hired and controlled doctor was to care for them. There was no established authority; the company guards served as the local police force.

Inside the mines, to complain against long hours, low rates of pay, the right to select their own checkweighmen, or even to express vaguely a desire to have a union of their own was tantamount to immediate firing. "The miner who protested lost simultaneously his job, his dwelling, and his right to remain in the community."

The United Mine Workers, then nationally a strong union, were determined to organize the Colorado coal

fields. In the summer of 1913, the UMW conducted a vigorous organizing drive. Considering the circumstances under which these miners lived and worked, it was not surprising that they eagerly responded to the call of the union.

The coal operators did not underestimate the union's potentialities to reduce the ruthless exploitation and weaken the despotic hold over the mining communities. Although the union did not make its formal recognition the chief issue, the coal operators even refused to meet with the UMW representatives for fear that such an act might be interpreted as a "form of recognition." The union, of course, made every effort to obtain a measure of relief without a strike.

A battle was obviously inevitable. The miners were determined to fight it out and the mine owners accepted the challenge. The armed guards were reinforced. Private detective agencies flooded the mining camps with professional strikebreakers, thugs and gunmen. Even before the strike broke out, a leading UMW organizer, Gerald Lippiatt, was killed by a private detective on the streets of Trinidad.

The Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency, notorious for its strikebreaking activities in other mining centers, was hired by the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company to carry through the infamous task of breaking the strike. The agency went about the job in a manner similar to army commanders in charge of preparations for a major battle. They built a special armored car with a mounted machine gun. During the strike, the miners called it "The Death Special." Rifle pits were dug in the hills adjacent to the mining proper-



ties, and were equipped with rifles, machine guns, and searchlights.

Most of these armed preparations were made openly, brazenly, and without interference on the part of any legally established county, State or federal authority. In Huerfano County, 326 imported strikebreakers were deputized three weeks before the strike began.

The union officials and the miners themselves understood that it would be sheer suicide to sit idly by without preparing for self-defense. In view of the company's armed preparations, the union had to do likewise. Union officials went to hardware stores and purchased whatever arms they could get. They had a right to do so, it being provided in the Constitution of the State of Colorado that "The right of no person to keep and bear arms in defense of his home, person and property shall be called in question." In 1915, a government agency upheld their action; the U. S. Commission on Industrial Relations in its report on the strike declared: "In all discussion and thought regarding violence in connection with the strike, the seeker after truth must remember the government existed in Southern Colorado only as an instrument of tyranny and oppression in the hands of the operators; that, once having dared to oppose that tyranny in a strike, the miners' only protection for themselves and their families lay in the physical force which they could muster."

In preparation for the showdown, the miners met in convention and adopted a set of nine demands: recognition of the union; a ten per cent increase in tonnage rates and a day scale to correspond with the rates in Wyoming; an 8-hour day; payment for dead work; election of checkweighmen by the miners without interference by



company officials; the right of miners to trade at any store, and to choose their own dwelling places and their own doctors; the enforcement of the mining laws of the State; abolition of the company guard system; abolition of the blacklist system. The convention set September 23, 1913 as the deadline for an answer to their demands.

The miners were aware that nothing short of a miracle would change the stubborn anti-union position of the mine operators. But the coal diggers and their union could not give up their demands. With their wives and children the miners spent long, dreary evenings discussing the days of cold, hunger, fear, and terror which they knew were approaching. Though they were fully aware that a strike meant losing, temporarily or permanently, the job, the house they lived in, and the community in which their children were raised, they could not yield without a fight.

Before the deadline date, the UMW picked spots where tent colonies were to be set up. From past experience they knew that, once the men refused to go into the pits, the triple blow would fall upon them within a matter of hours. It had been drilled into the coal diggers' minds that in reply even to the mildest form of protest "down the canyons" they would go.

And so, on that fateful September 23, 9,000 miners packed their meager belongings and, together with their women, children and aged, abandoned the mining camps and marched "down the canyons" to set up some sort of a life in the union-built tent colonies.

The strike was hardly 24 hours old when violence flared throughout the Colorado coal fields. On October 9, the trigger-happy mine "guards" got down to their real business. They entered the Ludlow tent colony and killed a

miner. A week later "The Death Special" arrived in the Forbes tent colony and without even a pretext for a provocation opened machine-gun fire, killing a miner and wounding a boy. A few days later, armed thugs killed three miners on the streets of Walsenburg. Murder was to be used as a weapon to intimidate the miners to the point of forcing them back to work.

John D. Rockefeller was quite enthusiastic about the course adopted by his managers in the coal fields. In a telegram to Superintendent Bowers he proclaimed: "You are fighting a good fight, which is not only in the interests of your own company but of the other companies in Colorado and of the business interests of the entire country . . ." With this kind of encouragement from Rockefeller himself, the reign of terror was further intensified. Efforts on the part of the Governor to end the strike failed. Efforts on the part of the union to compromise—including willingness to give up a demand for recognition—failed. Efforts of the union to eliminate further bloodshed by proposing that the miners and mine "guards" be disarmed also failed.

When Governor Ammons ordered out the State troops with instructions to forbid the troops to escort strikebreakers, the miners met them as friends and surrendered their arms. But soon after, the Governor, under pressure, rescinded his original orders, and the troops became the chief strikebreakers. They even permitted the imported gunmen to use the uniform of the National Guard. The General in command suspended civil law, and criminals in uniform took over.

The Colorado State Federation of Labor called an emergency convention. A committee to investigate the actions

of the militia was set up. Heading the committee was James H. Brewster, professor of law at the University of Michigan. The members of the committee covered the strike areas to gather evidence. These distinguished citizens reported to the Governor what they had uncovered. At the same time they recommended that the commanding general be removed, that other high officers be discharged from the National Guard, and that the professional strikebreakers be discharged from the militia as a means of preventing further killings. The Governor ignored these recommendations. Aroused by his behavior, the Colorado Federation of Labor initiated a petition for a recall election.

The strike dragged on through the cold winter months of January, February and March. Freezing weather, hunger, sickness, intimidation, terror and death could not break the morale of the miners. Just as frontline soldiers adjust themselves to a miserable and precarious trench existence, so did the Colorado coal miners and their families. In expectation of spring when life would be more bearable, they held on.

The forces on the other side—the mine operators, the private gunmen, and the State administration—were now openly lined up against the miners. The U. S. Commission on Industrial Relations, reporting on this stage of the strike, said: "Thus, by April 20th, the Colorado National Guard no longer offered even a pretense of fairness or impartiality, and its units in the field had degenerated into a force of professional gunmen and adventurers who also were economically dependent and subservient to the will of the coal operators."

Incensed by their failure to weaken the strike, the gun-



men in uniform, with the approval of the mine operators, decided on a tactic of all-out terror in order to finally break the strike. Ludlow, because of its location, was strategically important. Therefore, the Ludlow tent colony was singled out for a major attack.

On April 20, the militia occupied a hill overlooking the tents, mounted several machine guns and at a certain set hour exploded two dynamite bombs. The miners' only chance of survival was self-defense. With a few rifles they still possessed, they answered the fire coming from the hill. Samuel Yellen vividly describes the pitched gun battle that developed: ". . . a rain of rifle and machine gun fire fell on Ludlow. Hundreds of women and children ran from the tents to seek shelter in the hills and at ranch houses. However, scores failing to escape, hid in pits, and cellars underneath the tents to protect themselves from the bullets. The gunfire continued for 12 hours and resulted in the death of one boy and three men, one of them a militiaman."

When it appeared that even this battle might be inconclusive, the officers ordered the troops to burn the colony down. They poured oil on the tents and set them on fire, "while the women and children who had huddled in their pits ran in terror from their shelters. . . . In one pit, 11 children and two women of the colony were discovered suffocated or burned to death after the tents had been set on fire. The militia took three strikers prisoner, and shot them while they were unarmed and under guard. . . . All that night, men, women and children wandered through the hills, in momentary danger of being shot by the militia."

The Ludlow massacre enraged the striking miners in nearby tent colonies. They rearmed themselves and



“marched to avenge the slaughter.” Workers throughout Colorado were so shocked and bewildered that they were ready to make extreme sacrifices in support of the fighting miners. The strikers themselves issued a general call to arms: “Every able-bodied man must shoulder a gun to protect himself and his family from assassins, from arson and plunder. From jungle days to our own so-named civilization, this is man’s inherent right.’ To a man they armed, throughout the whole strike district. Ludlow went on burning in their hearts.” (*Autobiography of Mother Jones.*)

Various labor unions offered the United Mine Workers an army of 10,000 volunteers. E. L. Doyle, Secretary-Treasurer of District 15 of the UMW wired President Wilson: “We shall be compelled to call on volunteers in the name of humanity to defend these helpless persons unless something is done.”

The battle continued and spread to other strike-bound communities. The miners succeeded in taking the initiative and occupied the area between Ludlow and Trinidad. As Mother Jones put it, “It was open warfare against the civil authorities, the militia, the mine guards, and the operators.”

On April 30, President Wilson ordered federal troops to take over the Colorado coal fields. The fighting ended when six troops of cavalry arrived. Thirty persons, most of them miners, had been killed, aside from the twenty-one who died in the Ludlow massacre.

Who was responsible for the violence? The *Survey*, in an editorial published on May 16, 1914, answered this question as follows: “The employers who have disobeyed the laws, the state which has not enforced them; the em-

ployers who hired mine guards to assault and intimidate, the state which took those mine guards in company pay into its militia, made some of them officers and then turned them on the strikers; the employers who had machine guns and turned them on the tented camps where dwelt the families of the strikers—what answer have they to the question of responsibility for war?"

### *Murder in Steel Towns*

In the 52 years between Homestead and 1938—the year in which the steel workers firmly established a national industrial union, the United Steelworkers of America—blood was shed in many a steel town. The Homestead strike set the pattern for the destruction of trade unionism in the steel industry wherever and whenever efforts were made to establish the principle of collective bargaining. At times the struggles were local and spontaneous. During other periods they were battles that decided the course of organized labor for many years. Whether skirmishes or decisive strikes, murder on the picket line was a chief weapon in the hands of the steel corporations.

In 1909, some 6,000 workers of the Pressed Steel Car Company of McKee's Rock, Pennsylvania, went on strike. Although the workers were completely unorganized, conditions were such that they had no alternative. It was either quit their jobs or strike. The company had introduced a wage system where payments were based on the total production of gangs rather than of individuals. To make things worse, the company refused to post the rates on a gang basis. The workers never knew how much to expect on any pay day. The men were also enraged against

an extortion system organized by foremen—workmen were frequently discharged for no reason at all and then reinstated for a substantial fee.

Considering the complete lack of organization, the walkout was highly successful, and the company lost no time in bringing force to bear. From the moment the strike was declared, 100 deputy sheriffs and 200 State constables, armed with rifles, occupied the vicinity of the plant. "Immediately rioting and bloodshed followed. Nearly 100 strikers and sympathizers were injured in repeated charges by the mounted constabulary. . . . Violence continued with many arrests and an order to the constabulary to 'shoot to kill.'" (S. Perlman & P. Taft, *History of Labor in the U. S. 1896-1932*, Vol. IV.)

The order was carried out. A steel worker named Harvath was shot and killed in cold blood by a state trooper. In sheer desperation, a strike committee which called itself "The Unknown Committee" for fear of violence against them, let it be known that "for every striker killed or maimed a trooper would pay with his life." Two weeks later another pitched battle was fought. When it was over, eleven men, mostly strikers, lay dead.

During the same year, 1909, the workers in the American Sheet & Tin Plate Company—with plants in Pennsylvania and Ohio—were engaged in a strike for the preservation of their union, The Amalgamated Association. As in McKee's Rock, the striking steel workers had to face violence and resultant murder. When the Aetna plant at Martins Ferry, Ohio, reopened early in 1910, Sol Edwards, a striker on the picket line, was shot and killed by a scab.

The next year the steel workers at South Bethlehem, Pa., went on strike in protest against Sunday work and



speed-up and for the restoration of extra pay for overtime and Sunday work. The state police arrived and opened fire on the strikers. The pickets ran for cover, but one remained on the ground, with a bullet in his heart.

In 1916, over 10,000 steel workers in Youngstown were on a strike for higher wages. The workers were determined and militant. Although it began as a walkout of unskilled laborers in one plant, the strike soon spread to the skilled workers and embraced the men in most plants. The steel companies were determined to break the strike by importing two trainloads of strikebreakers from the South.

Knowing full well that this meant their jobs, the strikers gathered at the mill gates to protest. The mill guards fired into the crowd. Three strikers were killed. "The rage of the strikers burst all bonds. . . . The workers raided the saloons, rolled kegs of liquor into the streets, emptied them and set them afire. Houses caught and six square blocks burned down. The Governor ordered out the militia, and the strike ended soon after when a further wage increase was announced." (Horace B. Davis, *Labor and Steel*.)

Lives and property were lost. Who was responsible? A grand jury was in session. For once it actually put the blame where it belonged. The jury's verdict found that the guards hired by the Youngstown Sheet & Tube Company "had precipitated the disturbance, and it indicted Elbert H. Gary and 113 corporations for violations of a State anti-trust law, charging them with conspiracy to keep down the wages of common labor and to raise the price of steel. The indictments were of course quashed." (Horace B. Davis, *Labor and Steel*.)

Four months later, in Braddock, Pa., the men of the Edgar Thomson plant of the Carnegie Steel Company



joined in a sympathy strike with the Westinghouse Electric workers in East Pittsburgh. Two strikers were killed by company guards.

The 1919 steel strike and the great AFL organizational drive that preceded it called forth a flood of violence on the part of the employers. They fully realized how high the stakes were. They knew that the period was decisive and that its outcome would be of lasting importance to organized labor; for there is an old adage: Where steel goes, so goes the country.

The organizing campaign—and later the strike—was conducted around twelve principal demands:

1. Right of collective bargaining.
2. Reinstatement of all men discharged for union activities, with pay for time lost.
3. Eight-hour day.
4. One day's rest in seven.
5. Abolition of the 24-hour shift.
6. Increase in wages sufficient to guarantee an American standard of living.
7. Standard scales of wages in all trades and classifications of workers.
8. Double rates of pay for all overtime after eight hours, holiday and Sunday work.
9. Check-off system of collecting union dues and assessments.
10. Principles of seniority to apply in the maintenance, reduction and increase of working forces.
11. Abolition of company unions.
12. Abolition of physical examination of applicants for employment.

At the beginning of the drive, the steel corporations

did not take the drive seriously. They felt it was another flash in the pan. But as soon as they realized that the workers meant business, they sprang into action. The efforts to break the movement crystallized along several lines.

Mass discharges of workers who joined the union took place. Prior to the strike, 30,000 were discharged and blacklisted so that they could not find jobs in other steel centers. All civil rights in the steel towns were completely suppressed. In many towns, union meetings were prohibited. Organizers were beaten and driven out. Even before the strike began, a woman organizer, one of the most able and most colorful workers in the campaign, was brutally murdered.

Mrs. Fannie Sellins was an organizer for the United Mine Workers of America. Her assignment was in the anti-union Black Valley district along the Allegheny River. Being, as Foster said of her in his book *The Great Steel Strike*, an "able speaker, and possessed of boundless courage, energy, enthusiasm and idealism, she was a most effective worker. . . . She was the very heart of the local labor movement, which ranked second to none in Pennsylvania for spirit and progress." During the steel campaign Fannie Sellins was threatened with death many times. On August 26, 1919, they "got" her. Several deputies surrounded her. She was hit by a club over the head and fell to the ground. When she attempted to get up, one of the deputies fired three shots straight at her.

But not even through outright murder could the employers destroy the organizing campaign, and on September 22, 1919, 365,000 steel workers began what was to become one of the greatest strikes in American history.

For three and a half months, a brave and courageous labor battle was fought. In this strike, 22 workers were killed, hundreds were slugged, shot and wounded, and thousands were arrested. The strike was lost. Organized labor was too divided, too craft-minded, too concerned with their own narrow craft interests rather than with all of the workers in their industry, to perfect the kind of solid labor front that could have brought victory in the face of employer violence.

## Murder in Our Time

### *Chicago Memorial Day Massacre—1937*

MURDER in steel towns continued after 1919; every time an effort was made to organize steel, bloodshed resulted. In 1937 the violence came to a head with the murder of ten strikers in Chicago. That murder has come to be known as the Memorial Day Massacre.

The Memorial Day Massacre has a special significance for union leaders, not only because it took place so recently. It is important for strike strategists to know that such a thing could happen not in a period of reaction when unions were on the decline and defensive, but during one of the most progressive periods in the life of our country; that it could happen at a time when organized labor was making its greatest strides forward, when Congress enacted pro-labor legislation, when the Supreme Court declared the Wagner Act constitutional, and when the White House was occupied by a man who was in many



instances friendly to organized labor. It is also of importance to union leaders that this bloodshed occurred during a "Little Steel" strike after the United States Steel Corporation, the citadel of the country's open shop, had fallen and signed a union contract and when few labor leaders thought that any steel company would put up serious resistance.

Violence against the strikers was in evidence from the very beginning of the strike. High officers of the Chicago police force had lined up the police department on the side of the steel companies. Pickets were roughed up, and strikers and local leaders were frequently arrested. The situation grew worse from day to day. Van A. Bittner, regional CIO director, publicly charged that Republic Steel had enlisted the support of captains and other high officers of the Chicago police department. It became evident that in the Chicago area Tom Girdler relied on the police force to break the strike. The Chicago chapter of the National Lawyers Guild wired a sharp protest to President Roosevelt, charging the Chicago police with violence against the strikers, preventing peaceful picketing, and illegal and discriminatory arrests of strikers and sympathizers. The *Chicago Tribune*, on the other hand, lauded the police for preserving "life and property, the business with which it is entrusted by the community." This notorious anti-labor newspaper assailed John L. Lewis for the miners' contribution to the 1936 Democratic campaign and raged that Lewis and his associates had "come to believe that, having paid their money they need no longer respect the rights of anyone whether employer, worker, bystander, or property owner . . . but Chicagoans can take pride in the fact that in this jurisdiction the law is not for sale. . . ."

With each passing day, it became more obvious that Tom Girdler had reached an "understanding" with the high police officials in Chicago. It was feared that this intimate relationship would inevitably lead to bloodshed. The union did everything possible to prevent such an occurrence. In fact, three days prior to the massacre, Van A. Bittner sent the following telegram to President Roosevelt: "The Republic Steel Corporation is using every means possible in conspiracy to violate and render ineffective the National Labor Relations Act. In furtherance of this conspiracy the Republic Steel Corporation has enlisted the support of captains and other high officers of the Chicago police department. We request that the Attorney-General's office immediately send government investigators to Chicago to investigate the entire nefarious scheme of Republic Steel Corporation and the collusion of these officers of the Chicago Police Department."

The bloody police attack arose out of an incident normal in the life of any strike. On Memorial Day the strikers, their wives, children and sympathizers gathered to protest police interference with peaceful picketing at the Republic Steel plant. At the close of the meeting, the strikers lined up to march closer to the mill to urge the scabs to leave the plant. When the marchers came within two blocks of the Republic gates, the police closed ranks and halted the picket line. What happened a few minutes later is told by George Robbins, a newspaperman on the scene.

"Tear gas grenades sailed into the crowd, enveloping the strikers in a thick, yellowish-blue cloud. The marchers quickly retreated, coughing and sputtering, and scattered in all directions on the rough and swampy prairie-land. There was a crackle of pistol shots, followed by a rapid

volley of gunfire. A grey-haired woman retreating ahead of me stopped suddenly. Her legs buckled under her and I could see the blood gushing from a leg wound. The field was strewn with dead and wounded. Police swept over the prairie, pummeling half-conscious men and women and hauling them into patrol wagons. . . . Five hospitals in the South Chicago area were taxed beyond capacity. Dr. Nickamin, staff physician at the South Side Hospital, said: "The wounded looked as if they had come from a virtual massacre." ( *New Masses*, June 15, 1937.)

Eight workers were permanently disabled. The ten who gave their lives in freedom's cause died as follows:

*Earl Handley*, of hemorrhage because his wounds were not treated. Workers got him into a car, but the police dragged him out and he bled to death.

*Otis Jones* had his spinal cord severed by a bullet in the back.

*Kenneth Leed* bled to death in a patrol wagon. A bullet had sliced through his back and into his abdomen.

*Joe Ruthmund* was shot from a distance and in the back.

*Lee Tisdale*, 50-year-old Negro steel worker, died of blood poisoning from a wound because of deliberate lack of treatment in the Bridewell police hospital.

*Anthony Tagliori* also died from a bullet in the back.

*Hilding Anderson* died of peritonitis.

*Alfred Causey* died of four bullet wounds.

*Le Francesco* died from a bullet shot through the back.

*Sam Popovitch* was not shot—his skull was battered to pieces by police clubs as he ran. It was hard to identify the bloody mass that was once a head.

The Memorial Day Massacre stunned the country. Indignation and protest against such unwarranted murder spread throughout the length and breadth of the nation. The striking steel workers in Youngstown, Canton, Warren, Johnstown and Buffalo determined that this must not happen to them. The instinct of self-preservation and



self-defense galvanized the striking communities in the steel industry.

Two weeks after that fateful day in South Chicago, a coroner's jury in Cook County, after an "investigation" of the death of ten men, brought in a verdict exonerating the police and excusing the massacre as "justifiable homicides." The coroner's jury came to this conclusion on the ground that an "armed mob" of CIO strikers "apparently intended to enter the plant of the Republic Steel Corporation." In other words, not only were the strikers murdered, but, as in the past, they were held responsible for the violence.

A great many newspaper editorials, columnists and radio commentators readily accepted this kind of verdict and interpretation. But this was not the verdict of the Senate Civil Liberties Committee. In a report of its investigation submitted to the Senate, it condemned the findings of the Chicago and Cook County authorities. The report said: "The action of the responsible authorities in setting the seal of their approval upon the conduct of the police, not only fails to place responsibility where responsibility properly belongs, but will invite the repetition of similar incidents in the future."

While the people of the United States were discussing, debating, and arguing to determine which side was really responsible, this same Committee, headed by Robert M. La Follette, Jr., uncovered a very interesting fact: the Paramount Company had taken a newsreel of the whole battle but had decided not to release it to the theaters. Such a documentary film would establish beyond a shadow of doubt where responsibility lay! A group of prominent Chicago citizens, headed by Paul H. Douglas, Professor



of Economics at Chicago University, telegraphed the Paramount asking that the film be shown in Chicago so that all might see what actually happened. To this request A. J. Richard, editor of *Paramount News*, telegraphed the following reply:

You asked fair questions, which entitle you to fair and frank answers. Our pictures of the Chicago steel riot are not being released any place in the country, for reasons reached after serious consideration of the several factors involved.

First, please remember that, whereas newspapers reach individuals in the home, we show to a public gathered in groups averaging 1000 or more and therefore subject to crowd hysteria when assembled in the theatre. Our pictures depict a tense and nervewracking episode which, in certain sections of the country, might well incite local riots, and perhaps riotous demonstrations in theatres, leading to further casualties.

For these reasons—the public policy which we consider more important than any profit to ourselves, these pictures are shelved, and so far as we are concerned, will stay shelved. We act under the editorial right of withdrawing from screen pictures “not fit to be seen.” This parallels the editorial right exercised by newspapers of withholding from publication “news not fit to print.” (*New York Evening Post*, June 17, 1937.)

Now in the past Paramount had released strike pictures. What was there in the Chicago Memorial Day picture that was likely to lead to “crowd hysteria”? And against whom would the public riot after seeing this picture?

The Senate Committee finally obtained possession of the film and in an atmosphere of utmost secrecy, reviewed it. The *New York Post* on June 17, 1937 reported that the audience was limited to little more than Senators La Follette (Prog., Wis.) and Thomas (Dem., Utah), who composed the committee, and members of the staff. The *Post* went on to say that those “who saw it were shocked and amazed by scenes showing scores of uniformed police

firing their revolvers point black into a dense crowd of men, women and children, and then pursuing and clubbing the survivors unmercifully as they made frantic efforts to escape. The impression produced by these fearful scenes was heightened by the sound record which accompanied the picture, reproducing the roar of the police fire and the screams of the victims."

At the same time the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* published a complete description of the suppressed newsreel. This account was reprinted in several other liberal newspapers.

A few days later, the news spread that the film definitely convicted the Chicago Police and Republic Steel guards of the deliberate murder of ten pickets. In Congress, Representative Teigan of Minnesota introduced a resolution asking the La Follette Civil Liberties Committee for a special showing of the film before members of Congress. The Congressman charged that "it was not fear of precipitating riots in theatres that caused Paramount to kill the film as claimed, but a desire to avoid antagonizing a powerful corporation like Republic Steel and the other companies that now have strikes in progress."

Representative Maury Maverick of Texas in a brief but bitter speech declared: "Over there in Chicago, nine men, something like six blocks from a steel plant, were attacked by the police and all of them were murdered. And we stand here and not a soul has said a word about those nine free-born Americans. All we do is spend our time criticizing organized labor."

Several newspapermen joined in the demand to make the film public. Jay Franklin, in his syndicated column of June 23, 1937, wrote: "We want to see the Paramount newsreel film of the Memorial Day Massacre of the steel

strikers by the Chicago police. We think we are sufficiently adult to sit through the spectacle of officers of the law firing on unarmed people, slugging women, shooting men in the back, beating a guy's brains out." Mr. Franklin made a fervent appeal to leading American journalists. "There is a chance," he wrote, "for Dorothy Thompson, ferret of fascism, to defend freedom of the screen. There Walter Lippmann, foe of censorship, can demand a showing. Mark Sullivan, Frank Kent and David Lawrence have often argued that freedom of public utterance is our best defense against totalitarian dictatorship. These conservative commentators are hereby invited to join in my demand that this film be shown to the general public. . . . Show this film! If that is the sort of country we live in, the sooner we see it, the better."

The film was never made public, for in it there was indisputable evidence as to who was responsible for the violence and murder on Memorial Day in Chicago.

### *Women Sit Down—Men Murdered. Youngstown—1937*

The Senate Civil Liberties Committee had declared that the failure of the Chicago authorities to place responsibility where it really belonged would encourage similar incidents in the future. Their words proved to be true even sooner than was expected.

June 19, 1937, in Youngstown was women's day on the picket line. Strikers' wives, many with their children, were picketing Stop 5 of the main entrances to the Republic mill. Early that evening one of the worst riots developed. What caused it? Captain Charles Richmond, who was in charge of the police stationed at the mill himself explained



how the trouble started: "The women were sitting down and about 200 men were standing grouped on the sidewalk, violating the peaceful picketing agreement the CIO made with us. They were asked decently to continue their picketing and they refused. . . . I told my men to fire their gas guns at their feet." (*Youngstown Vindicator*, June 21, 1937.) In other words, the police officer actually admitted that women and children, a little tired from picketing, attempted to sit down and rest awhile and that because of this he ordered a gas attack.

The provocation was more than the strikers could take. The news of the gas attack on the women spread like wildfire, and hundreds of strikers rushed to the Republic plant. For six hours, in pitch darkness, the workers defended themselves and their wives against a brutal attack deliberately precipitated by the police, deputy sheriffs and Republic gunmen. Starting with tear gas, the employer's henchmen ended with gunfire.

John Bogovich, a steel striker, heard of the trouble at the main gate of the Republic plant. He told his wife he was going there. A few hours later, two young strikers were carrying the limp body of John Bogovich, blood streaming over his neck and face. Three times the bearers had to throw themselves to the ground to dodge the fusillade of bullets. John Bogovich died in an automobile on the way to the hospital. While Bogovich was being carried away, James Eperjesi, another striker, was fatally wounded and died a day later.

Here the author must inject himself into the story of events during that Saturday night in Youngstown. First, because I was near John Bogovich when the bullet hit him. I saw him fall to the ground, saw his blood gush out.



He looked at me but could not speak. Second, because this bloody first-hand experience with company-sponsored and directed violence against a group of unarmed men on strike for recognition of their union demands enables me, who saw it all, to place the blame where I know it lies. Third, because Tom Girdler, in his book *Boot Straps*, speaks of me as one of the "agitators" whose job it was "to make trouble. Why? Because clashes, civic strife, rioting would further intimidate the majority of workers who were then eager to come back to work." I shall present here part of the testimony I gave under oath to the Senate Committee on August 5, 1938.

*Senator La Follette.* Mr. Steuben, were you present this morning and did you hear the testimony of the witnesses concerning the events at Stop 5 on June 19?

*Mr. Steuben.* Yes, sir.

*Senator La Follette.* In connection with your work, did you have any occasion to visit Stop 5 on June 19?

*Mr. Steuben.* We held a mass meeting in Campbell, Ohio, on Saturday, June 19. Around 8:30 we received a telephone call that there was a lot of trouble around Stop 5. Mr. Mayo and I jumped into a car, and rushed immediately to Stop 5.

*Senator La Follette.* What time, about, did you get to the vicinity of Stop 5?

*Mr. Steuben.* We arrived about 15 minutes later. The streets were crowded and it was difficult to get to the place. When we reached Poland Avenue and Caledonia St., we could not go any further. We got out of the car and walked towards the gas station. It was difficult to reach that gas station, the bullets were already flying over our heads and the whole section was contaminated with tear gas. It took us about 5 minutes before we got to the gas station. When I arrived there, I saw quite a few of our strikers standing there. That was one of the most dangerous spots to be in. I urged them to leave the Sunoco gas station. We made a serious attempt, myself and others, to take the crowd up the hill on Powersdale. The situation grew more dangerous, it looked like civil war. While urging the men to leave, about 15 feet away from me I saw a man falling to the ground, and I rushed over.

*Senator La Follette.* You said the Sunoco station. Which one of these stations is the Sunoco station?

*Mr. Steuben.* It was the right side (indicating).

*Senator La Follette.* The one here (indicating) 1319?

*Mr. Steuben.* I cannot see that far.

*Senator La Follette.* Where the stick is now?

*Mr. Steuben.* Yes, that is the Sunoco station, the right side there.

I saw the man fall, I ran over, he was groaning. At first I thought he just fell, but I immediately saw blood coming out somewhere from him (indicating).

*Senator La Follette.* Where do you mean "from here"?

*Mr. Steuben.* I would say the blood came out right below his chin.

I urged the men to grab a car and rush him to the hospital. Before that, we identified the man as John Bogovich.

*Senator La Follette.* Was he a striker?

*Mr. Steuben.* Yes, he was a striker and an employee of the Youngstown Sheet & Tube Company. He had a picket card with him, he had his mill check number and a few other things. The car returned about half an hour later and reported that before they reached the hospital, he died.

*Senator La Follette.* I offer for the record a certified copy of the coroner's finding in the inquest over the body of John Bogovich.

*Mr. Steuben.* When I heard the man was dead, I realized how grave the situation was. I urged the men to follow me to the top of the hill. They did. I climbed on top of an automobile to address the strikers. It was a dangerous thing to do, but I felt it was my responsibility to talk to the men, to tell them Bogovich was killed, that they were not armed, that the whole thing was obviously planned and that therefore they must leave that place. Finally the crowd agreed to leave, and we marched to the Center Street Bridge.

Meanwhile the shooting was heard all over town. There was danger that even though this crowd was away from Stop 5 that other crowds may arrive at Stop 5 and our men will return. There was a school at the corner, near the Center Street bridge. I went up on top of the stairs and spoke to the men again, urging them not to go back, but to disperse. Right after, I went to the nearby Republic headquarters of the union and called Sheriff Elser.

I told the sheriff what happened. I begged him and I pleaded with him to take his men away or instruct them to stop shooting, as serious consequences may develop and I already have told him

that one of our men was killed. Sheriff Elser replied over the telephone: "What guarantees can you offer me that my life will be protected?" Well, I told him as far as he is concerned, he must take as much of a chance as anyone else. Furthermore, I told him, if he calls Republic Steel and instructs the men to stop shooting, there will be no danger of him being shot or killed. We had quite a lengthy discussion over the telephone. I remember that discussion very vividly. I told Sheriff Elser, "Am I to understand you, Sheriff, that you are yellow or a coward and you refuse to come out and do your duty, or are you part of that plan or conspiracy that brought about this riot?" His reply was, "Well, you may think anyway you want, but I don't go out."

While this conversation took place, State Senator Lipscher was in the office. He said, "Let me call him, I know him well." The senator called. He hung up. He looked at me and said "I should mind my own business in Columbus and he will mind his own business in Youngstown." The senator tried to reach the governor. I am not sure whether he reached him or not. During all this time, there was also in the office Jackson of the *Youngstown Vindicator*. Briefly speaking, the sheriff did not come out. Only about five or six in the morning, the sheriff called and said he is coming out and he wanted to meet me half way. Suddenly the sheriff announced to the newspapers that he wanted a truce with me. Well, the sheriff here said that he likes a truce once in a while but he wanted a truce after two of our men were murdered, but he refused to come out, or in any way, shape, or form eliminate the trouble during the entire night.

The Senate Committee proved in every detail that the responsibility for the death of the two Youngstown strikers lies with Republic steel, the Youngstown police department and the deputy sheriffs.

### *"Little Steel"—Big Sacrifice*

Because the police force in Chicago and Youngstown got away with murder, it was inevitable that more steel workers should die on the picket line. On June 28, nine days after Youngstown's bloody riot, the seven States



"Little Steel" strike claimed its thirteenth life with the death of George Mike, at Beaver Falls, Pa. A World War I veteran, wounded and gassed, he was unable to work, but his sympathies were with the strikers. He went to the picket line. Mike was hit by a projectile from a tear gas gun in the hands of a deputy sheriff. The deputy was identified. The District Attorney of Beaver County took him into custody, but the man was never tried for murder.

Next in line of bloodshed was Massillon, Ohio, another Republic Steel town. It happened on a Sunday night, July 11. A correspondent of *The New Republic* was on the spot. His report was published in the July 28, 1937 issue of the magazine.

On Sunday night, as was customary once or twice a week, a crowd of several hundred were gathered around the headquarters (of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee); an orchestra made up of a bass viol, a violin and mandolin, surrounded by children dancing in the street, was the center of attention. . . . A car drove up and parked opposite the headquarters, its headlights bringing into focus a group of armed police approaching down the street. A shouted order demanding that the lights be turned off attracted the attention of the crowd. . . . "Douse those lights or we'll fill 'em full of lead!" Before the driver of the car had a chance to comply, a volley of shots riddled the car, followed by the discharge of tear gas bombs, by volley after volley of gunfire and gas, directed at the cars and at the crowd, now wildly scattering for safety, and at the union headquarters, where many sought refuge. With intervals of quiet, the police continued to send volleys of shots into the headquarters for an hour. A man stepped from the door during one of the intervals, thinking the shooting was over—he was shot in the leg without a word of warning by a deputy sheriff in the group of twenty which had arrived from Canton as reinforcements.

When the battle was over, two more workers—Fulgencio Calzada and Nick Valdoz—were killed. Again, who was responsible for the murder?

There is a surprise witness to answer this question—



none other than Massillon's chief of police, Stanley W. Switter. Ten days after the murder, he was subpoenaed to Washington by the National Labor Relations Board. Chief Switter was on the witness stand for five hours. He drew a picture of a small town administration, trying to be fair and not to act as strikebreakers until bit by bit they were crushed down by Republic Steel and other business interests. He described how on June 9, a little over a week after the Chicago massacre, Karl Meyers, Republic's general manager for the Canton District, conferred with him at a Massillon hotel. Mr. Meyers said to the chief: "What the hell is going on here? How long are you going to let the hoodlums carry on? Why the hell don't you take action like the Chicago police did and put them where they belong?" The chief resisted this sort of pressure and retorted that the police force was not meant to be a "strikebreaking outfit."

The chief, a former steel worker himself and with many friends among the strikers, continued to resist company pressures. Tom Girdler's agents had been demanding that the city increase its police force. When the National Guard entered Massillon early in July in order to open the plants, General William E. Martin demanded that Switter put special police on the payroll and organize a home guard of Republic Steel employees. The chief again protested and insisted that the police force should be neutral. The chief testified that the general shouted: "This is no time to be picking neutral men. You must be ready to take over." Without waiting for the chief's consent, Republic Steel brought Switter a list from which special police and home guards were to be drawn.

Switter and the other city officials stood firm. Finally,

however, they broke down. On July 7, the "Law and Order League" composed of prominent businessmen, came to City Hall and threatened to impeach the Mayor and the rest of the administration. By then, the chief testified, he was completely worn out. When the Mayor finally asked him, before the "Law and Order" delegation, if they should agree to add the special police, Switzer threw up his hands. "Give 'em the whole damn works," he said. "They want it so let them take it. They're inviting bloodshed. We have fought against it, but we can't resist this pressure any more. So God dammit, let them take it."

That was on July 7. Four days later, the strikers were attacked and the two men murdered.

Death continued to spread to other strike-bound steel towns—to Canton and Cleveland, Ohio. Altogether, 18 men were killed in the 1937 "Little Steel" strike. And while violence raced throughout the strike areas, while hundreds of workers were wounded and gassed and thousands arrested, the press and radio and the halls of Congress resounded with the hypocritical cry of "CIO violence." Not a single police officer, deputy sheriff, company official or company guard was brought to trial and convicted on a murder charge.

### *Roll Call of the Dead*

The instances of violence recounted above all took place during famous strikes that are now part of labor history. But murder on the picket line is not limited to certain communities, nor is it a matter only of the past. Men and women have been killed in all parts of the country, in a variety of industries, including strikes in small shops and

cafeterias, and this intentional bloodshed is being used today as a weapon of strikebreaking. Thanks to the Labor Research Association, there is now available a compilation of the killings during strike struggles in the years 1934-1949. From these records, tabulated in the Association's *Labor Fact Books*, the Roll Call of the Dead which appears in the back of the book has been compiled.

### *How to Fight Employer Violence*

Such is the story of employer violence in strikes. In the past organized labor did not conduct a sustained campaign against it. It is high time to do so. Proper strike strategy demands that labor convince the nation that violence does not proceed from strikers but is the strikebreaking weapon of employers. This, to be sure, is only the first step in self-defense, but much, very much, hangs upon it.

Like other phases of strike strategy, the struggle against violence cannot begin when a strike is declared, or when a worker is killed or injured. It must start long before. Below, in outline, are the various angles from which the fight against employer violence must be conducted.

1. In each State organized labor must campaign for the enactment of a State law that would prohibit private police forces in industry. It is the company police force that often makes up the central core of men responsible for violent acts in time of strike. In their ranks there are mercenary and criminal elements and those that have made strikebreaking their profession. The coal and iron police in Pennsylvania were a ruthless anti-labor armed force. Their crimes were so numerous that Governor Pin-



shot, under public pressure, was forced to liquidate the outfit. It is not so commonly known, but it is a fact that the police force on the railroads is among the most vicious private anti-labor armed forces, well experienced in provoking and exercising violence.

2. In all industrial communities, organized labor must conduct a fight for the right to deputize strikers. For this is one of the best guarantees that there will be no violence. Labor can now present a proud record showing that when local authorities deputized strikers violence did not take place, or was negligible. This should be a talking point when the request is made. And it should be made invariably; even a refusal has its value—it exposes the partiality of a city or county authority. Should the right to deputize strikers not be obtainable, then the strike leaders should ask for the next best thing—that members of other labor unions in the community be deputized.

3. The strike and its leadership must expose the “neutrality” on the part of the city authorities. Elected officials, such as the mayor and the county sheriff—and they particularly—must be held accountable to all citizens. A public officeholder must be made to realize that a strike in his community is an acid test of his own loyalty and devotion to the people as a whole, including the strikers and their families. He should be made to feel that if he does not adopt a friendly attitude toward the strikers, he is eliminating all possibilities for himself to remain in public office because no worker will vote for him. And by a friendly attitude is not meant that a formal statement of neutrality is made. The union must demand that the mayor instruct the chief of police that under no circumstances will the police force be used for the purposes of



breaking or weakening a strike. The union must insist that the police force will not permit the employer to send into the strikebound community professional strikebreakers, thugs and others who breed violence. Organized labor must demand that the city fathers will not vote for emergency appropriations or special ordinances that will be favorable to the employer. It means that the police department will be prohibited from accepting from private munitions companies tear gas, rifles, and revolvers paid for by the company whose workers are on strike.

4. Organized labor must campaign, on State and city levels, to enact laws that will prohibit private detective agencies from practicing strikebreaking. From a moral, economic, health or indeed from any social point of view, strikebreaking is a menace to society. Agencies that send out emissaries of ill will should not have the seal of legal approval. Until this is accomplished, labor unions must campaign for laws that will prohibit men with criminal records from becoming private detectives or serving on a company police force. In some States, such a law already exists.

5. The strike leaders, upon receipt of well substantiated information that the employer is about ready to embark on a campaign of violence, should waste no time in making this information public to the strikers, the authorities, the local press and the people as a whole. The value of such a course is manifold. First, a forewarned community often can prevent such planned violence. Second, if the violence cannot be prevented, at least strikers will be ready for it—the picket lines will be strengthened, the ranks will be consolidated. Warning the community will also clearly

establish, in the mind of the public, the fact that the union took the initiative in exposing the source of violence.

6. If and when violence does come, it must be met and defeated; self-defense is a moral and legal right. There is no weapon more powerful in a struggle against violence than a show of the organized might and solidarity of the strikers themselves. Several thousand strikers, reinforced with representatives of other sections of organized labor, marching to city hall, demanding that a stop be put to violence; that those responsible for it be arrested immediately; that gunmen be disarmed and driven out of town, or if they are members of the community, be placed under arrest: these measures will go a long way in curtailing violence. If violence comes from police authorities, as it often does, the same mass pressure must be applied.

Violence occurs most often on the picket line, and there, too, the answer is solidarity. There is nothing like a mass solid and determined line to defeat violence. A wall of humanity standing solid as a rock and deep in their hearts convinced that what they are doing is just and right can withstand and defeat just about everything the employers can hand out.

7. One of the most important steps in a campaign to defeat violence and expose its source is to ferret out all planted company agents within the ranks of the strikers. In labor history there are examples, too numerous to mention, of how company stoolpigeons and private undercover men in the guise of strikers, and sometimes even of union officers, have organized violence for the sole purpose of compromising the union, the strikers and their leaders. There are cases when such dishonorable people, for a price, have inveigled innocent strikers into some act of

violence, only to betray and frame the same workers later. It is, therefore, the responsibility of strike leaders to be extremely vigilant and watch closely those strikers who are advocating measures that might result in violence.

8. When exposing violence it is always a wise and necessary step to invite prominent citizens in the community to conduct their own independent investigation. If violence assumes major importance, nationally prominent citizens should be invited to the strike scene. During the 1919 steel strike, the Interchurch World Movement set up a commission of inquiry under the chairmanship of Bishop Francis J. McConnell. These church leaders did a splendid job in exposing the violence of the steel corporations and local authorities during that strike. A few years later, during a miners' strike, the famous novelist Theodore Dreiser did a similar job. Equally good is it to demand a congressional investigation of the violence that occurs.

9. In fighting and exposing violence, the union cannot limit itself to the company trigger men or its hired hoodlums. Top management is responsible, and must be held responsible, for those murdered, wounded or injured. On February 24, 1949, the National Labor Relations Board ruled that a union was responsible "for strike violence." The Board found that the United Furniture Workers, CIO, and its Salem, Ind., local, as well as eight officers, violated the Taft-Hartley law by strike activities at the Smith Cabinet Manufacturing Company of Salem. Among the actions which the Board held as violating the ban on coercion of employees were: "Carrying of sticks by pickets and the piling of bricks for use by pickets; blocking the plant entrances by railroad ties, automobiles, raised gutter



plates and tacks; threatening violence to non-strikers over loudspeakers; intimidation of non-strikers as they tried to enter the plant; placing of pickets in a manner to prevent non-strikers from unloading a boxcar on a railroad spur to the plant. . . ." (*New York Times*, Feb. 25, 1949.)

If the union and its officers are held responsible for pickets holding sticks to protect themselves, or placing obstacles in the way of scabs, how much more should the employers be held responsible for taking the lives of pickets!

10. Finally, the union must be technically equipped in its fight against violence. If trouble is expected, strikers with cameras should be on the picket line. Catching the strikebreaker or company guard or a policeman aiming his tear gas gun or revolver at strikers can be valuable evidence in a court case. To take down immediately the names of strikers or bystanders who observed the violence can help produce authentic witnesses. Taking sworn affidavits from eyewitnesses can also prove valuable.

11. All the measures outlined above are necessary and must be a part of effective strike strategy. However, by far the most effective weapon against violence is organized political action by the workers. Because organized labor is 15 million strong, it is within the reach of workers now to elect their own representatives to public office. Labor must give deep consideration to this. It is an illusion to think that labor can gain substantial and permanent victories through the two old parties. It is one step forward and two steps back—as witness the Taft-Hartley Act. Only independent political action through a third party movement can be the final answer to violence as it is also, in the last analysis, to economic insecurity.



## CHAPTER 11 //////////////////////////////////////

### Modern Strikebreaking— The Mohawk Valley Formula

#### *The “New” Approach*

WITH all the weaknesses and inadequacies of our trade union movement, it has obtained a degree of recognition that makes breaking strikes solely through open terrorist measures more and more difficult. A decade of the Wagner Act has had its curbing effect on open and violent anti-union movements. The work of the La Follette Committee in exposing industrial espionage and employer violence is another important factor. The La Guardia anti-injunction act, the law against shipment of scabs from one state to another, the curtailment of activities of private detective agencies, and, above all, the growing union consciousness of the workers, have made it necessary for the employers to develop more “scientific” methods of strike-breaking. The Mohawk Valley Formula is the plan they have dreamed up.

The Mohawk Valley Formula for breaking strikes con-

stitutes a new technique, more subtle than open terror and therefore more dangerous. While this formula includes violence against workers, violence is not the chief strikebreaking weapon. The organization of back-to-work movements, the formation of "Citizens Committees," the utilization of the press and radio, the employment of "missionaries," the popularization of slogans such as "the right to work," and alienating the middle classes are all part of this new technique.

The Mohawk Valley Formula was developed during the Remington Rand strike in 1936. After the strike was broken and the union temporarily defeated, Mr. James H. Rand, Jr., addressed the "Citizens' Committee" and jubilantly declared: "Two million businessmen have been looking for a formula like this and business has hoped for, dreamed of, and prayed for such an example as you have set"—an example that "would go down with history as the Mohawk Valley Formula."

This was no idle boast. The National Association of Manufacturers recommended this formula as a model of industrial relations. Top corporation executives studied the formula and applied it whenever labor trouble developed. In the July 30, 1936 *Labor Relations Bulletin* of the NAM, there appeared, under the title "A Community Organizes," an article analyzing the entire formula and highly recommending it to the employers of the nation. Since then, these "scientific" methods of strikebreaking have been applied in every major strike in the country.

A year later, the formula became a real threat to the then developing great organizing campaigns. Labor reacted strongly; it took the position that the formula became the employers' method of combating and flaunting

the Wagner Act. The National Labor Relations Board was called upon to investigate thoroughly the meaning, the direction, and the legality of the Mohawk Valley Formula. On March 13, 1937, the NLRB made public findings exposing it as a blueprint for strikebreaking.

Strike strategists must study this formula carefully as a prerequisite for successfully combating it. Those unions that have done so, have reduced the dangers of this formula to a bare minimum. It is possible to expose and defeat the Mohawk Valley Formula, and the best proof of that is the fact that the Remington Rand workers, who in 1936 were the first victims of this strikebreaking method, have since that time won several strikes and are at present strongly organized. In the following pages this "new approach" of the employers will be discussed point by point.

### *Attempt to Discredit Strike Leaders*

*"When a strike is threatened, label the union leaders as 'agitators' to discredit them with the public and their own followers."*

It is highly significant that the very first step the formula recommends is to discredit the union leaders. This is a shrewd thrust at confidence. One of the major requisites for a successful strike is confidence of the rank and file in the leaders who are about to take them into battle. If this confidence can be seriously undermined, then workers may begin to doubt the advisability of the strike or of their joining it. The situation can be compared with that of a military unit in a forward area about to enter a battle. If soldiers have absolute confidence in their commanding officers, their morale is high and discipline fits the occa-

sion. On the other hand, lacking such confidence, soldiers will very likely put up only token resistance, desertions will be greater and casualties higher.

To counteract this attack on confidence, one has to appreciate what the label "agitator" is intended to carry with it. In the minds of the public the term "agitator"—more often it is "outside agitator"—is synonymous with "trouble maker." It is this impression of a labor leader that those who shout "agitator" want to get across. It is the first step in attacking and trying to discredit a leader.

Labor history shows that the stronger and the more influential a labor leader is, the more often and the more violently he is called "agitator," the more bitterly he is attacked. During the formative years of the American trade union movement, Eugene V. Debs was the most harassed and attacked labor leader. He was also undoubtedly among the best loved, most trusted and respected. His name was magic. He attracted thousands to his meetings, no matter what part of the country he went to. In order to counteract his great influence, the press of the nation conducted an unending campaign of vilification against him. Mother Jones was a similar type of devoted labor leader, and she, too, was under constant barrage. "Big" Bill Haywood belonged to this category. After World War I, William Z. Foster became target number one.

It might be said, perhaps, that Debs, Haywood, Mother Jones and Foster were under severe attack not just because they were trade union or strike leaders, but essentially because they believed in socialism. Undoubtedly this made the attack upon them sharper. But recent and current labor developments indicate that labor leaders



with a mildly progressive outlook, and even conservative labor leaders, do not escape severe attacks. Sidney Hillman and John L. Lewis are perfect examples.

The fact that John L. Lewis has for more than a decade withstood the severest fire in the press, over the radio and in the halls of Congress and that today his influence among the American miners, and workers in other basic industries, stands at the top is proof positive that the Mohawk Valley Formula for discrediting labor leaders can be defeated. How did Lewis do it? His success is due first of all to the fact that he has conducted an uncompromising struggle for constant improvement of the conditions of the miners. Added to that is his own great courage, great native ability, and the fact that he is the head of one of the most important unions.

But there is only one John L. Lewis. He possesses attributes and strength that hundreds of other labor leaders do not possess. How can they—over and above fighting uncompromisingly for the best interests of the workers—meet and defeat the number one point in the formula?

Surely it cannot be done by silence or by being on the defensive. The usual public statements by employers that “our employees are happy and content but it is the outside agitators that are forcing strike action” can and must be thoroughly exposed. Workers do not strike unless conditions are such that no other course is available to them. In most cases the strike is about wages, hours, conditions of work. A strike victory therefore means immediate economic improvements for the workers involved. The organizers—the so-called “agitators” and “outside agitators” and “trouble makers”—must be shown to be leaders of a movement that results in a better life for the workers, their

families and the community. The CIO and the AFL must be pointed out as being no more "outside" organizations than the Chamber of Commerce or the National Association of Manufacturers.

Labor leaders all have to be teachers. They must educate workers to understand and appreciate the reasons for organization. The notion that unions and their leaders are organizing strikes because they are interested in dues collections, or because they are power-hungry, or downright racketeers, must be dispelled. Workers must hear what John L. Lewis had to say about the CIO. In 1936, immediately after the Committee for Industrial Organization was organized, Lewis made a nation-wide radio address on the approaching steel campaign. These were his words:

By way of sharp contrast to the policy of bankers, promoters, and directors, it may be said that the Committee for Industrial Organization in organizing the steel workers is animated by no selfish motives. Its fundamental purpose is to be of service to all those who work either by head or hand in the mines, quarries, railroads, blast furnaces, and mills of the steel industry.

Our Committee would bring to the steel workers economic and political freedom; a living wage to those lowest in the scale of occupations, sufficient for the support of the worker and his family in health and modest comfort, and sufficient to enable him to send his children to school; to own a home and accessories; to provide against sickness, death, and the ordinary contingencies of life.

There is but one other fundamental motive which the Committee for Industrial Organization has for unionizing the steel industry.

It is simple and direct. It is to protect the members of our own organizations. We know, although we are now free men and women, that so long as millions of other industrial workers are without economic and political freedom, a condition exists which is a menace to our freedom.

It is this kind of healthy thinking that workers must be educated in to immunize them from company propaganda

about "outside agitators." To be sure, there have been and there are labor racketeers. But are the legal and medical professions condemned just because there are crooked lawyers and unscrupulous doctors? Workers should be taught that they must not, as Westbrook Pegler does, condemn the trade union movement just because some union officials are corrupt.

### *The Taft-Hartley Attack on Union Leaders*

In a number of ways the Taft-Hartley Act legalizes point number one of the Mohawk Valley Formula for strikebreaking. Section 9 (h) of this Act virtually creates a situation where employers can determine what kind of leadership a union shall or shall not have.

It is required under Section 9 (h) of the law that the officials of a union file so-called "non-Communist" affidavits before the union may avail itself of the services of the NLRB. The National Lawyers Guild has rightly expressed what this section really means. In a statement submitted to the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, it declared that such affidavits "are a form of pressure upon union members to abandon the usual standard they employ to evaluate leadership—the quality and consistency of performance in the interests of the union members—and to apply instead a standard of no definition and vague suspicion." All an unscrupulous employer has to do when confronted with a union leadership constantly fighting for the interests of its members is to refuse to bargain with such a union on the grounds that its leaders are "reds." The long Pacific Coast longshore strike of 1948 was fought over this issue. The General Electric Company



in Schenectady canceled its contract with the UE on similar grounds. The struggle against the Taft-Hartley law has thus become in part a battle against management's interference in the internal affairs of unions and for the rights of organized labor to determine its own destiny, including the type of leadership it is to have. This explains why such old conservative unions as the International Typographical Union or such conservative leaders as John L. Lewis, Philip Murray and others have opposed Section 9 (h) of the Taft-Hartley law.

Section 9 (h) makes it more difficult to fight against the discrediting of labor leaders, but it is nevertheless possible to turn point one in the strikebreaking formula into its opposite. One way of doing it is to bring forward rank and file strike leaders, workers with long years of service in the plant or industry and well known in the community. It is equally important to popularize the national or international leaders of the union who are directly connected with the strike; their background, their contributions to the labor movement, the strikes they have led in the past, and the benefits the workers derived as a result of their leadership should be made known to every striker. If this is done, the employer's attacks, instead of weakening the prestige of the leadership among the workers and in the community at large, can very well strengthen it.

### *Attempt to Discredit Union Demands*

*"Disseminate propaganda, by means of press releases, advertisement and the activities of the missionaries; such propaganda must stress the arbitrary demands of the strikers. . . ."*



As has already been stated, workers always strike for, or against, something very concrete and specific. If the employer succeeds in convincing workers that their grievances are not real, but imaginary, or that their demands are unjust and therefore unobtainable, the will to go out and stick it out can be broken down. To discredit the demands of the union, therefore, is attack at a vital point.

The employers' main argument against union demands for a higher wage rate is inability to pay. They produce figures, comparative scales in other communities—usually those that are unorganized—their low rate of profit, and a whole string of smooth arguments as to why they cannot meet the demands of the union. Often the employers present their case to the workers and the public based on "facts" showing that they are paying the "highest scales" in their history.

To speak of labor's "unfair" or "arbitrary" demands is pure and simple employer propaganda intended to becloud the real facts. The truth is that in recent years the strike demands of all the labor unions have been fairly uniform and have arisen out of the economic conditions in the country and the overall needs of the workers. The uniformity in labor's demands is an expression of the uniformity in labor's needs as well as a manifestation of greater coordination on the part of the labor movement.

Far from being "unfair" and "arbitrary," labor's wage demands in recent years have been extremely modest. Wages are not what is in the pay envelope, but the purchasing power of what is there, or *real* wages, and serious economists, unanimously agree that *real* wages have not gone up in recent years; the cost of living has in most cases outrun increases in money wages. Even in wartime this

was so. Wartime wage increases little more than kept pace with the cost of living, in most cases, and only rarely exceeded it. In the war years the struggle for a higher standard of living which the trade unions had for so long tried to bring about had to be abandoned. Then and since the effort has been to keep up with the rising cost of living. The wartime "Little Steel" wage formula was based on this fact.

But are wage demands that attempt not merely to hold but to raise the workers' standard of living for that reason "unfair" and "arbitrary"?

Way back in 1921, the AFL Convention formally repudiated the policy of tying wages to the cost of living. The Convention report that year contained the following statement on this subject: "The practice of fixing wages solely on a basis of the cost of living is a violation . . . of sound economic theory and is utterly without logic or scientific support of any kind. What we find as a result of practice, so far as it has gone, is that there is a constant tendency under it to classify human beings and to subordinate classes, each class having a presumptive right to a given quantity of various commodities."

Labor will and must fight continuously for higher standards of living. This is a major reason why workers join unions. This, in the final analysis, is the only sound wage policy of the trade union movement. In this connection Harry Bridges developed a wage formula that can well be emulated by many other labor unions. It is a simple, sound formula. "Get as much as you can get." This explains why West Coast longshoremen never accepted token wage increases while other unions did.

All formulas which distract workers from the struggle

for a higher standard of living will ultimately hurt labor and consequently the nation. When in 1948 the leaders of some unions signed contracts with escalator clauses providing for a downward revision in wages when the cost of living went down, they in fact legalized a permanently low standard of living. The escalator clauses were a grave error. Tying wages to the cost of living plays into the hands of the employers. It arms them with the argument they need to fully exploit point number two of the Mohawk Formula—to discredit labor's demands by calling them "unfair" and "arbitrary."

Labor's constant struggle for wage increases, whether for the purpose of meeting the rise in the cost of living, or for a higher standard of living, cannot be discredited so far as workers are concerned. Labor leaders need not be apologetic or on the defensive. The workers involved better than anyone else understand the justice of the union's demands. It is to the public at large that the union's strategy to defeat this point of the formula must be addressed primarily. The entire community must be made to appreciate the justice of the union's demands. Of late, the employers and the press have played up the angle that a wage increase automatically means a price increase on coal, steel, automobiles, electrical appliances, home and farm equipment. In a number of industries, when wage increases were granted this did happen. But, as was pointed out in a previous chapter, often the prices went up 'way out of proportion to the wage increase. Because the trade unions have not sufficiently exposed this, a rift is being created between workers and farmers and other consumer groups.



## *Are "Fringe" Demands Important?*

When it comes to wage demands, labor is potentially in a strong position. It is less strong when it comes to other strike demands, and this is where the Mohawk Valley Formula can be more dangerous. A situation like that of "Little Steel" in 1937, for example, gives the employer the whip hand. The workers in "Little Steel" got wage increases but the steel corporations refused to sign a written contract. In a case like that the union's position is very difficult. The unions can easily be put in the wrong before the workers and in the community. The employer can come forward and say, "In dollars and cents the workers have nothing to gain from a strike; in dollars and cents they stand only to lose."

On the surface, the employer presents a strong argument; it seems as if the union's demand for a written contract is just "arbitrary." In reality it is not. Without a contract, the employer, to make up for the wage increases, can worsen working conditions through the introduction of speed-up and other devices. Without a contract there are no limitations on firing, and in most cases there is no floor on wage scales. The employer can hire and fire at random, and it is only a matter of time before workers with higher rates are replaced with lower paid workers. It is certain that if the workers did not stand to lose in dollars and cents by his avoiding signing a union contract, the employer would not invest thousands, often hundreds of thousands, of dollars to fight a union. All this must be made clear to workers who are about to be engaged in a strike where wages are not the chief demand.

Since the end of the war, an increasing number of



unions have concentrated on a new set of demands such as health programs, sick benefits, pension plans and similar demands. Often these are referred to as "fringe demands," thus implying their secondary importance. This is a wrong attitude; for some of these demands are of vital importance to the workers and their families. In a nation like ours, where industrial development continues with constant introduction of new machinery which in turn demands greater exertion on the part of the workers, their state of health is far from a "fringe" issue. The chief demands in the 1949 coal miners' and steel workers' strikes centered around the issue of satisfactory health and old age pension plans. The UAW and other unions have also made this the chief demand in their 1949 negotiations. Until such time as our government provides medical care for all its citizens, organized labor will continue its struggle for medical plans. In the final analysis such "fringe" demands strengthen the economic security of the workers.

Let us cite, as an example, the New York hotel workers. They are solidly organized under the Hotel Trades Council, AFL. During the past few years, these workers have enjoyed a health and insurance plan which provided sick benefits of \$10 and \$12 a week for 26 weeks. In addition, the plan provides for 21 days' hospitalization and, in case of childbirth, for an extra \$80 toward the hospital bill. The plan provides a total of \$600 each year to meet the medical needs of the hotel workers. In dollars and cents, these benefits are as high as a substantial wage increase. To these workers, their health and insurance plan is not a "fringe" issue. Nor was it to the coal miners and New York teamsters; they considered the issue big enough to

go out on strike for it. Such demands cannot be easily discredited by a Mohawk Valley Formula when the union properly explains it to its members and the public at large.

Because of the growing speed-up, and increased productivity in industry, organized labor will soon bring forward a new central demand—the thirty-five and thirty-hour week. It is to be expected that the employers' highly paid, high-pressure labor relations men will meet this demand with the cry of "socialism," "un-American," and "detrimental to industry." It will be labor's responsibility to conduct a vigorous campaign to point out that a shorter work week will reduce unemployment, will preserve the health of the nation's wage earners, and will establish happier family relationships.

Labor's perspective and trend will be more and more to present its economic demands in "package" form. This has best been exhibited by the powerful UE when in April 1949 its General Executive Board recommended to all locals that they "work out their demands for the coming negotiations within the framework of an increase of \$500 per year per employee in wages and salaries, pension improvements and health programs and other economic benefits."

Here a union presented its program in a manner that even the most backward member can understand. The worker knows what his union aims to accomplish for him and his family in one year. Such a union need not fear that point in the Mohawk Valley Formula which calls for an attack on the union's demands.

## “Law and Order”

### “Impartial” Citizens Committees

IF THE leadership of a strike lacks alertness and vigilance, the next point of the Mohawk Valley Formula can be a most effective strikebreaking weapon.

*“Align the influential members of the community into a cohesive group opposed to the strike. Include in this group, usually designated a Citizens Committee, representatives of the bankers, real estate owners and businessmen.”*

Citizens Committees are potentially dangerous because their origin and real purpose are generally concealed. At the start these committees—which are frequently composed of civic and church leaders and consequently have prestige both in the community at large and among the workers—appear to be impartial bodies. Their spokesmen talk from both sides of their mouths. They are for the “right to strike” and the “right to work” at the same time. Behind closed doors they work under the strictest super-

vision of the employer, but in their public utterances they are neither for one side nor the other.

Numerous examples could be cited to show how this part of the Mohawk Valley Formula was applied during strikes throughout the country. Two will suffice.

During the 1937 "Little Steel" strike in Canton, Ohio, a group of "prominent citizens" gathered in utmost secrecy for the purpose of organizing a "Citizens Law and Order League." There was no double talk at this meeting. Those present knew that their aim was to break the strike by eliminating "mob rule," and one of the specific purposes of this committee was "to find suitable men to serve as special police and deputy sheriffs." Yet this same strike-breaking outfit issued a statement to the press declaring: "The Citizens Law and Order League is not a strikebreaking organization. It is not the purpose of the League to take part in any industrial controversy."

In Youngstown, Ohio, the same Republic Steel Corporation set up another "citizens committee" under the name of "Mahoning Valley Citizens' Committee." Publicly it declared: "We recognize the right of labor to collective bargaining and to the protection of the law in any lawful efforts and attempts of labor in its presentation and its safeguard." But behind closed doors it pressured the Ohio governor to send troops that would cover and protect a back-to-work movement.

### *False Patriotism*

These "innocent" Citizens Committees, springing up on the eve of a strike or during a strike, perform a variety of functions, depending on the local and state political set-



ups. But always they parade as super-patriotic organizations dedicated to "uphold the Constitution and law and order." The Youngstown Committee wound up its first public appeal as follows: "We solicit the citizens to join with us, to dedicate ourselves anew, in the spirit that was exemplified by the fathers of the Declaration of Independence."

Often the impression is created by these Citizens Committees that to go out on strike is tantamount to an insurrection or uprising and the citizens are called upon, in the name of patriotism and loyalty, to uphold the country and flag. In Canton, Ohio, during the steel strike, attorney Adolph Unger, a leader of the Law and Order League, delivered a radio address over station WHBC and this is the kind of appeal he made to the citizens of Ohio: "Are we living in the United States of America, whose rights and liberties were purchased by the spilling of blood and maiming of men and the heartaches of women and the yielding of lives? Are Concord, Lexington, Bunker Hill, Gettysburg, Château Thierry, Soissons, Saint Michel, Belleau Woods, the Argonne myths? Are Patrick Henry, Ethan Allen, Nathan Hale, Grant, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt legendary figures or did they actually exist in this country? Has the Bill of Rights become a mere scrap of paper to be carelessly swept aside because we have a dispute called a labor dispute? Is the American flag still the symbol of the paramount sovereignty of this government and constituted authority, or is it to be replaced by a labor flag?" (Hearings of the Committee on Education & Labor, 75th Congress, Part 32.)

One of the chief tasks strike-bound employers assign to

Citizens Committees is to serve as a pressure group. With tremendous financial resources at their disposal, it is possible for such committees to perform a number of things that would greatly lose their usefulness if the employer did them directly and openly. In Canton the Citizens Committee organized a delegation of "prominent citizens," to meet with the Mayor and county sheriff to demand that they deputize 200 special police for strike duty. In Johnstown, Pa., when the Governor ordered the Bethlehem plants closed and declared martial law, the Citizens Committee organized a campaign of telegrams and letters calling upon the Governor to rescind his order so that a back-to-work movement could be planned. The Governor was actually threatened with a recall movement. In other communities, it was the Citizens Committees that lined up support of women's and veterans' organizations against the strike. In Monroe, Mich., the Citizens Committee openly assumed leadership over a vigilante movement. In Youngstown, Ohio, it was the Citizens Committee that led and organized the back-to-work movement.

### *Camouflaged Company Propaganda*

The most important assignment of Citizens Committees is to mold public opinion against the workers, the strike, the strike leaders and their union. However, it is a principle laid down by the Mohawk Valley Formula that company propaganda is much more effective when camouflaged. The employers are advised not to rely entirely on full page ads signed by the company; regular newspaper columnists and radio commentators can less easily give forthright support to an employer than to a "people's

movement" against a strike or strike wave. And many a columnist is seeking for strategic opportunities to come out on the employer's side. In 1938, the La Follette Committee discovered that Mr. George Sokolsky, a nationally known syndicated newspaper columnist, was on the payroll of the National Association of Manufacturers.

As a rule Citizens Committees are supplied with large amounts of money to hire professional publicity men, buy radio time and newspaper advertising space. In recent years "labor trouble" advertising has become quite a business. Often an exceptionally vicious anti-labor column will be reprinted in a local newspaper in the form of a full-page advertisement.

Among other things a Citizens Committee may be bold enough to call a "mass meeting" in order to "demonstrate" its support in the community. Where this is done, the meetings are usually packed with people influenced by management personnel.

### *Exposing the "Citizens Committee"*

What can strike leaders do to counteract the devious acts of a Citizens Committee?

The first thing is to study the social composition of the committee, the personal and professional background of the individuals. Invariably the committee will be found to consist of middle and upper class citizens—such as bank officials, insurance men, lawyers—with a sprinkling of church leaders. Retail merchants or others who depend on the good will of the people are most unlikely to be included, while the "big money" men, although they exert a decisive influence over these committees, are usually



kept in the background. The Canton Citizens Law and Order League, for example, consisted of the following:

15 attorneys	1 contractor
6 association executives	1 physician
5 insurance agents	1 judge
3 manufacturers	1 utility executive
3 suppliers	1 commission merchant
2 ministers	1 salesman
2 retailers	1 stockbroker
2 real estate dealers	

A majority of this committee, it was found, had business connections in one form or another with the steel corporations.

It is not enough for the union to know who is on the committee. It must trace the committee's origin, its financial backing, and find out who its true master minds are. In most cases the union will find that the majority in the leadership of such committees have a personal interest in supporting the employers. All this the union must expose. There will, of course, be cases where innocent and well meaning citizens will be dragged into such committees. Such people must be shown the light and urged to publicly disassociate themselves from the committee.

The fight against these committees must not degenerate into a fight against the individuals involved. The emphasis must be on their strikebreaking activities. To begin with, the union must tear down the mask of "neutrality." All their verbal pronouncements that they are not opposed to organized labor in general must be shown to be pure hypocrisy. These committees must be forced into a position where they stand in the eyes of the public not as community representatives, but as an agency of the employers. Should the Citizens Committee call a "mass meet-



ing," the strikers and their families must be urged to attend. Being there, they can make a strong request that a representative of the strikers also be heard. But the best way to expose the function and the unrepresentative character of the committee is to foster the creation of a pro-union Citizens Committee. A public debate between the leaders of the two committees will quickly show which one truly represents the community and the public interests.

Often the majority of a citizens committee serve in a passive capacity, merely lending their names. The real operators are professionals, including imported publicity men working for national advertising firms, and other institutions specializing in anti-union activities. Others among such operators are trained strikebreaking salesmen, people who know how to approach women or foreign-born groups. These salesmen are known as "missionaries." Their job is to mingle among the strikers and their families, disseminate false rumors, and plant seeds of demoralization. Among such operators are people who specialize in recruiting scabs from among weak strikers and among the unemployed. Quite often neither the strikers nor the people in the community are even aware of the fact that in their midst there is a battery of outside professional strikebreakers, imported for the duration of the strike. They must be searched out and publicly exposed.

Inasmuch as one of the chief objectives of the Mohawk Valley Formula is to arouse the community against the strike, union leaders must direct their attention to all the public moves of the Citizens Committees. In a previous chapter were outlined a number of steps that must be taken to win public support. By putting these steps into successful operation a union can take away the initiative

from a Citizens Committee and even prevent it from coming into existence.

### *Violence in the Name of "Law and Order"*

*"Bring about the formation of a large armed police force to intimidate the strikers and to exert a psychological effect upon the citizens. This armed force is built up by utilizing local police, state police if the Governor cooperates, vigilantes and special deputies. The deputies should be chosen from other neighborhoods so that there shall be no personal relationships to induce sympathy for the strikers. Coach the deputies and vigilantes on the law of unlawful assembly, inciting to riot and disorderly conduct; unhampered by any thought that the strikers may also possess some rights, they will be ready and anxious to use their newly acquired authority to the limit."*

Under this section of the Mohawk Valley Formula force and violence are brought upon the heads of the strikers in the name of "law and order." Here the formula picks up a chip of the old strikebreaking block. But the emphasis is on psychological terror and intimidation. What the employers are after is to create the impression that in time of strike there is need for police reinforcements, special deputies, and State troops because violence is inevitable.

Facts do not bear out such a conclusion. Violence is inevitable only when the employers are determined to make it so. The coal miners are a case in point, and their experience should be used to prove to workers and the public at large that strikes are not synonymous with violence.

Two decades ago, a major strike in the coal fields

brought death with it. But during the recent miners' strikes there has been little violence; in fact, the newspapers have played up the "holiday atmosphere" in mining towns. What are the reasons for this change? The first is that liberal Governor Pinchot abolished the dreaded Coal and Iron Police. The second is that the coal operators have been blocked from sending into the coal fields a mob of cutthroats, murderers and frame-up artists by the outlawing of interstate shipment of scabs and professional strike-breakers. Most important, the coal operators have developed a healthy respect for the miners' organized strength, indomitable spirit to stick it out, and deep-rooted loyalty to the union. In other words, there is no violence in the coal fields now because the employers have decided that terror and intimidation have not been useful in the mining country.

Violence characterizes strikes today for the same reasons it has always characterized them—because the employers still have hopes of crushing unions by defeating the strikers. The Mohawk Valley Formula recommends achieving this by creating, in the name of "law and order," an atmosphere of terror and intimidation. Mary Heaton Vorse, a journalist who has covered strikes for the past thirty years, describes in *Labor's New Millions* how this kind of atmosphere was created in Johnstown in 1937: "Excited citizens, many of them looking like high school boys, were being given black hats, night sticks, and arms, and were being sent to patrol the residential quarter of town to arouse feelings of alarm in the non-striking population. Everything was being done to give the effect that a violent and dangerous situation existed which must be handled by force."



A similar atmosphere of expected violence was created in the 1949 New York taxi strike. On the day of the strike—April 1, 1949—the *New York Times* on its front page carried a story with the following titles and subtitles:

TAXI DRIVERS STRIKE TODAY  
POLICE PUT ON A "WAR" BASIS  
"SAFE ROUTES" SET FOR CABS

*Motorcycle Force to Patrol Streets Advised for  
Travel. Police to Carry Nightsticks, Work in  
12-hour Shifts. With All Leaves Canceled—  
Get Orders to Protect Public at Any Cost*

The same issue of the *Times* carried another story with the headline, "Taxis Shop in Vain for Riot Insurance." Similar scary headlines were on the front pages of most newspapers in New York. All through the taxi strike the "violence" angle was played up and blown up even though, with the exception of a few minor skirmishes, there was no violence. Mayor O'Dwyer, the police department, and the press did in New York what the Citizens Committee did in Johnstown, Pa. They created an atmosphere that all hell was about to break loose in this great metropolis. The *New York Times* of April 1, 1949, opened its story with this announcement: "The Police Department was placed yesterday on its 'gravest' emergency footing to control any violence that might arise from the taxicab strike and 'to insure' the safety of the public. Orders, effective at 12:01 A.M. today, put the entire department on twelve-hour tours of duty; a move that will augment the regular working force by 3,250 patrolmen and detectives. The special duty chart invoked by Police Commissioner William P. O'Brien has been used only once before, *in the first days after the United States' entry into World War*



II." Mayor O'Dwyer made a special broadcast to the people with warning there will be no "goons," "no rough-house and no violence." Unfortunately, the leaders of the taxi strike did not expose in time the strikebreaking character of this violence propaganda.

To create a violence scare without violence is like smoke without fire! It is bound to dissipate. Hence there is need to actually create incidents of violence. And here is where the professional stoolpigeons, employer-hired saboteurs and frame-up men enter the strike picture. American strike history is crowded with incidents where Pinkerton, Bergoff and other notorious strikebreaking agencies have planted their men among strikers to perform these kinds of Judas tasks. Such "plants" are generally known as *agents provocateurs*. The La Follette Senate Committee uncovered and exposed hundreds of such characters. They are planted in every labor organization, and no doubt quite a few of them are still in labor's midst waiting till their masters order them to strike a blow.

### *The Vigilante Movement*

The creation of an atmosphere and incidents of violence—which, of course, are immediately blown up in the press and beamed over the air waves—opens the door for a much more important phase of strikebreaking—the development of a vigilante movement. Such a movement is particularly important to an employer when local or State authorities are pro-labor minded or fearful of political consequences if they line up against the strikers and their union.

The vigilante movement has a long history in our nation and in the American labor movement. It began one hun-

dred years ago in California when the people formed vigilance committees to wrest from thieves and gamblers the government power they had usurped and to defend the right to work and build a decent citizenry. Then it was a progressive movement. Afterward it became one of the worst expressions of reaction in American life. It is that today.

Significantly this movement flourished best during periods when the federal and State administrations did not pursue hostile policies toward organized labor. At such times employers could not rely on federal and State troops, on injunctions, on the Department of Justice and other federal agencies to intervene on their behalf. Thus between 1936 and 1938, years when the Wagner Act dominated labor relations, extra-legal means became the employers' only recourse, and the vigilante movement developed on a national scale. A National Citizens Committee was set up in July, 1937, to coordinate the work of the local committees throughout the country.

Of course, vigilantism varied from State to State, depending mainly on the position of local and State authorities toward organized labor. This can be illustrated by what happened at the time of the 1937 steel strike. In Johnstown, Pa. and Monroe, Mich., open armed vigilante movements developed, but not in the Ohio steel towns. There can be no doubt that one of the main reasons was that Governor Davey of Ohio was ready and willing to cooperate with the steel corporations, whereas in Michigan and Pennsylvania the governors were not ready for such cooperation. In Ohio there was no need for vigilantes; the Citizens Committees could concentrate on dis-

crediting the strike in the eyes of the public, and the armed forces of the State were available to do the rest.

### *The Underground Conspiracies*

In each locality the vigilantes develop their own specific form according to the circumstances. In Michigan, in the middle thirties, there was the powerful "Black Legion" whose leadership was dedicated to a merciless struggle against organized labor. It was a secret, well armed organization based on military principles. Murder and terror were its chief weapons. The true character of this organization was expressed by its own oath:

In the name of God and the devil, one to reward, the other to punish, and by the powers of light and darkness, good and evil, here under the black arch of heaven's avenging symbol I pledge and consecrate my heart, my brain, my body and my limbs and swear by all the powers of heaven and hell to devote my life to the obedience of my superiors and that no danger or peril shall deter me from executing their orders.

I will exert every possible means in my power for the extermination of the anarchists, Communists, the Roman hierarchy and their abettors.

I further pledge my heart, my brain, my body and my limbs never to betray a comrade and that I will submit to all the tortures that mankind can inflict rather than reveal a single word of this, my oath.

Before violating a single clause or implied pledge of this, my obligation, I will pray to an avenging God and to an unmerciful devil to tear my heart out and roast it over flames of sulphur.

That my head be split open and my brains be scattered over the earth, that my body be ripped up, my bowels be torn out and fed to the carrion birds.

That each of my limbs be broken with stones and then cut off by inches that they may be food for the foulest birds of air.

And lastly may my soul be given unto torment; that my body be submerged into molten metal and stifled in the flames of hell, and



that this punishment may be meted out to me through all eternity in the name of God our creator. Amen. (George Morris, *The Black Legion Rides.*)

After a number of local union leaders were murdered between 1933 and 1936, the "Black Legion" was discovered and exposed. The great forward surge of the automobile workers defeated this fascist organization on the picket lines. But this did not stop vigilantism in Michigan; it only changed its form. In 1937 there sprang up in each auto town a local vigilante organization. These local groups were backed and organized by local leaders of the Republican Party and leaders of American Legion posts who were also active Republicans. In Grand Rapids, Michigan, American Legionnaires openly campaigned for the establishment of uniformed, armed forces, separate from the State militia, whose only duty would be to break strikes. The town newspaper, the *Chronicle Independent*, became the mouthpiece for the vigilantes. In August 1937 it declared:

Let a special tax be assessed for the purpose of providing a defense fund. This defense fund can be used to pay for the training of 1,000 or more young men enrolled in a special auxiliary police force to be available at times of emergency. The men in this corps should be paid for attending drills and training periods, in the same manner that members of the National Guard companies are paid.

THE COST OF PROVIDING, DRILLING AND MAINTAINING SUCH A FORCE WOULD BE FAR LESS THAN THE COST TO THE CITY OF ONE DAY'S STOPPAGE OF BUSINESS.

In Flint, Mich., the vigilantes formed a "Law and Order League" which was powerful enough to control the city council, to name a city manager and appoint its own police chief. In Monroe, the then Mayor of the town armed a mob that drove the CIO organizers out of town



and at a point of a gun prohibited picketing at the Republic Steel Plant.

The vigilante movement spread from North to South and from East to West. In Tampa, Fla., the Ku Klux Klan took up the "crusade" against labor with terror and death resulting. In Seattle, Wash., a vigilante committee was organized to break the 1936 maritime strike. A special bulletin was issued to the vigilantes with the following instructions:

Temper your severity to suit the occasion and if forced to fight, don't forget that nothing so swiftly sickens a mob of its course than brutal, stomach-wrenching, soul-sickening brutality swiftly, fearlessly and judiciously applied. . . .

It would be well to provide canned foods and arms for your family, and to arrange for them to stay in company with the families of other members of your unit. Plan with your wife or parents for a place of meeting in case your home is destroyed or impossible to reach. . . .

**TREATMENT OF CROWDS:** A crowd is a potential mob. The best time to stop a fight is before it starts. Don't temporize, don't harangue, don't "reason with them," don't bluster, don't argue, don't "answer back," don't let your men be surrounded nor left without an avenue of withdrawal, don't bite off more than you can chew, don't plunge into the heart of a crowd for individual arrests unless your force is strong and the crowd is "covered" by your riflemen from a superior altitude.

Remember that the agitators do more shoving from the rear than leading from the front; never neglect an opportunity to improve the potential effect of your fire by posting men on roof tops and second story windows, but don't weaken your force too much by division of your strength.

Don't forget that women are aligned with the enemy, they are apt to be in the front rank of a mob and are prone to be the most hysterical and the most abusive. Ignore them unless they imperil your men or your mission and then treat them exactly as though they were men. . . .

**WHEN YOU MAY FIRE:** Remember that our sole object is to prevent revolutionary tactics, bloodshed and property damage, by

lawful and American means! You must be loath to loose your piece (gun), but must not hesitate to use it if necessity demands. If time permits and wisdom dictates it, challenge the offending party before you fire upon him.

GENERAL NOTES: A cornered rat is hard to whip; leave your crowd an avenue of escape and the weaker souls will take it, thus launching a wholesale rout which you can follow to advantage. Mount your machine guns low, in ground floor windows or entrance ways, behind cover, but so they can cover a wide area. Upper windows are good for riflemen but bad for machine guns since their arc of fire covers but little ground. Keep informed every minute of the enemy's whereabouts, arrange signals from men in high places, by runners or arm signals. (Isobel Walker Soule, *The Vigilantes*.)

### *How to Fight Vigilantism*

Strike leaders must not underestimate the danger of vigilantism. In August 1937 the American Institute of Public Opinion conducted a poll. It asked this question: "Do you approve of citizens' groups, called vigilantes, which have sprung up recently in strike areas?" The results were as follows:

In the east central region, which includes Michigan and the steel strike area, the returns were 22 per cent in support of the vigilantes. Other areas voted thus:

New England	Yes	22%
Middle Atlantic	Yes	22%
West Central	Yes	28%
South	Yes	31%
Rocky Mountains	Yes	19%
Pacific Coast	Yes	34%

It augurs ill for the future that so large a percentage of American citizens could approve such a fascist-like movement—product of anti-labor hysteria built up by a hostile

and often irresponsible press. It is conceivable that in time of a future strike wave, a hostile Congress and a hostile press and radio might stimulate very substantial backing for vigilantism.

How shall labor combat the menace of force and violence in the name of "law and order"?

1. *Foresee violence and expose attempts to create it.* In each strike situation the union leaders, on the basis of past experience and considering the issues involved, can anticipate in general terms the kind of tactics the employer will use. For example: will management attempt to operate the mill with scabs? If so, the employer will inevitably stimulate violence propaganda and exert pressure upon the authorities to enlarge the police force or their own protection department. The first duty of the strike leaders is to expose this kind of propaganda.

2. *Demand the removal of munitions.* Almost every large company is stacked up with munitions. On the eve of the strike, or during its early stages, the strikers must appeal to the public authorities with a demand that these munitions be taken out of the plant for the duration of the strike. This step by itself will bring into the open which side is preparing acts of violence.

3. *Fight against the deputizing of private citizens.* At all times the union must vigorously oppose the creation of an extra armed force by the deputizing of private citizens. The very idea of such a force is an offense to the workers on strike. It implies that a strike is a crime and that strikers are potential criminals. The union must do more than oppose; it must offer its own manpower for police duty and press the argument that in communities where strikers were deputized there were hardly any acts of violence.

Failing to accomplish its objective, the union must concentrate on exposing the character of the citizens deputized and show their bias in favor of the company. In particular the union should expose the criminal element that always becomes part of such a force.

4. *Fight unceasingly all efforts to organize vigilantes.* No armed volunteer groups to serve the employers' interests should be permitted in the community, and proceedings should be instituted against public officials encouraging lawlessness and violence against the rights of workers on strike. Appeals should be made to State and federal authorities, over the heads of local officials, to curtail official or private lawlessness.

5. *Form a mass defense organization.* Perhaps the most effective way of combating vigilantism is for the strikers to form an organization capable of protecting the strikers, the picket line, the union leaders, strike headquarters and active strikers and their families. The younger strikers, particularly veterans, can give substance to such a strikers' defense organization.



## Back-to-Work Movements

### *A Modern Version of Scabbing*

STRIKE leaders cannot lead workers to victory unless they are thoroughly acquainted with the next part of the Mohawk Valley Formula.

*"Most important, heighten the demoralizing effect of the above measures—all designed to convince the strikers that their cause is hopeless—by a 'back-to-work' movement, operated by a puppet association of so-called 'loyal employees' secretly organized by the employer. The association wages a publicity campaign in its own name and coordinates such campaign with the work of the missionaries circulated among the strikers and visiting their homes."*

All other measures outlined in the Mohawk Valley Formula are simply preliminaries to this decisive strikebreaking step. If a back-to-work movement succeeds, the strike fails. Mary Heaton Vorse aptly characterized it when she

wrote that this movement "emerged from an instinctive movement to the number one place in a conscious strike-breaking technique."

A back-to-work movement is not an entirely new development. It would be more accurate to say that it is just our well known old scabbing modernized to fit in with present-day conditions. It was first used on a large scale in the 1919 steel strike. The strike investigation by the Inter-church World Movement recognized it as a new form of strikebreaking and in its report declared: "As a fighting proposition the strike was broken by the successful establishment of, first, the theory of 'resuming production,' and, second, the fact of it."

As has already been stated, scabbing as a profession, or as a temporary practice, is very much discredited. The famous strike song "Which Side Are You On?" sung on thousands of picket lines and in thousands of union halls expresses labor's deep contempt for scabs:

*"Oh workers can you stand it?  
Oh tell me how you can.  
Will you be a lousy scab  
Or will you be a man?"*

It is in part this attitude which has resulted in the lessened importance of professional scab agencies, although the many legal restrictions on such agencies are also a factor. While private scab agencies still exist, and while it is conceivable that under certain circumstances they could expand their strikebreaking activities, they would in any case be totally inadequate in relation to the present strength of organized labor.

Back-to-work movements are the employers' answer to

the new situation. In many respects this answer is superior to the old-fashioned scab method of strikebreaking. Built as they are on employees who worked in the factories before the strike took place and who are known in the community, back-to-work movements do not arouse the same hostility. It is much easier to develop a resentment against out-of-town scabs than against local workers who have decided to betray their own interests and those of their fellow workers.

### *When and How the Formula Is Applied*

Another advantage a back-to-work movement has for the employer is that it causes people to believe the workers are divided over the strike issue. It should be remembered that the leaders of such a movement often form an "independent" union that is for everything except the strike. In most cases, too, the press creates the impression that the back-to-work movement actually represents a majority of the workers involved in the strike.

A third important advantage to the employer is that through such a movement he can keep constant check on striker morale and know just how many strikers are ready to break ranks and return to work. This can have a great bearing on the course of the strike.

A final advantage of a back-to-work movement is that even partial success has its value; the employer can operate with scabs and continue to refuse to bargain collectively, or he can delay the ending of the strike.

Under what circumstances does an employer organize a back-to-work movement?

A study of strikes in which employers developed or attempted to develop back-to-work movements leads to the

conclusion that this tactic is generally used when the employers' objective is to break not only the strike, but also the union, or to prevent the union from establishing itself on a permanent basis. That was the original objective of the author of the Mohawk Valley Formula. Certainly, this was the major objective of the steel corporations in 1937; under the leadership of Tom Girdler, they were determined to prevent the CIO from entering their plants.

During the post-war period, a number of powerful corporations made an attempt to return to the open shop. Among these were the meat packing companies and Remington Rand, then making a second effort to destroy the union. The Remington Rand strike took place in 1947 and the meat packers' strike in 1948. In both strikes a back-to-work movement was developed. Similarly, in the 1949 New York taxi drivers' strike, where the fleet owners' chief objective was to prevent the union from establishing itself, a back-to-work movement was instituted.

On the other hand, during the same period there took place, particularly in the coal fields and auto industry, even larger strikes than the above, but here the employers did not, at the time, set themselves the smashing of the unions as their main objective. In these strikes there was no attempt to organize back-to-work movements. Strike leaders who are confronted with back-to-work movements can justly conclude, therefore, that their union is up against a life and death struggle.

### *How Workers Are Misled*

What are the circumstances under which strikers could be misled into joining a back-to-work movement?

Undoubtedly one of the major factors would be lack of



adequate preparation for the strike. When workers are properly forewarned about all possible moves their employer may make when the strike comes, they know what to expect, and when this move does come, it loses the element of surprise and causes no confusion in the ranks. In fact, the prestige of the leadership is strengthened; when strike leaders can predict in advance the moves of the employer, the workers' confidence in them naturally increases.

A back-to-work movement has greater chances for success among newly organized workers. Among such workers there has not yet developed a deep-rooted sense of solidarity. Such workers are likely to have a strong attachment for the company, developed through clever company propaganda, welfare schemes, sports and social activities and, until recently, company unions; for the new union no such attachments could as yet have developed. It takes time to build solidarity. Back-to-work movements are much less likely to succeed in industries where the unions have been in existence a long time and solidarity has become deep-rooted. The miners' slogan "no contract—no work" is an expression that reflects a very high degree of union understanding and solidarity. There were no back-to-work movements in the numerous strikes in the coal fields.

A situation in which wages, hours, and union recognition are not the chief issues—because the employers have already granted such demands in the hope that this would keep the workers out of the union—lends itself to a back-to-work movement. Such was the case in the 1937 steel strike. Tom Girdler, his "Citizens Committees," his press campaign, his "missionaries," his letters to the workers and

full page advertisements kept hammering away that "no questions of wages, hours, or collective bargaining" were involved in the strike, and that even if the strike were won the men would gain nothing in dollars and cents. Such a demagogic appeal to men who had not been organized or on strike for almost two decades had its effect.

An unwholesome psychological setting is also conducive to a back-to-work movement; employers hope and pray for a situation where a feeling of doubt in final victory develops. Sources of such doubts can be manifold. First and foremost is employer propaganda; through every conceivable means employers endeavor to undermine the strikers' confidence in final victory. Often, however, doubts of final victory arise out of poor performance on the part of strike leaders. Poor organization, isolation of leaders from members, confusion, lack of warmth and understanding of the needs of the strikers and their families, and personal behavior unbecoming strike leaders are all factors that undermine morale and create doubts.

Again, immediate financial and other material considerations can become an attraction to workers lacking a trade union background, particularly at a time when their financial needs are greatest. In Youngstown, the employees of the Youngstown Sheet & Tube were offered the following if they would join the back-to-work movement:

1. All workers, whether union or non-union, would be granted a choice of regular annual vacations, ranging from one to two weeks, or the equivalent in cash.
2. All men who entered the plants would get time and one-half on a 12-hour shift.
3. Insurance would be continued on all its 15,000 employees in the Youngstown area throughout June (while

they were out), by paying all premiums, usually deducted from pay checks.

4. Physical examinations were to be waived. (This meant that thousands of older employees who might otherwise be disqualified by failure to meet physical requirements of employment, would not need to have such examinations.)

Similar material inducements were offered to workers in other strikes in return for joining a back-to-work movement.

In service industries—i.e., hotels, restaurants, taxis, etc.—there are additional reasons why strike leaders must prepare the workers against the dangers of a back-to-work movement. There is a basic difference between workers employed in factories, plants, and mines, and workers employed in service industries. A tipping employee such as a waiter, a bellman or a taxi driver receives only a nominal wage; his real take-home pay depends on his tips. A taxi driver who earns his day's pay through collecting forty per cent of the meter reading as well as tips is much more susceptible to company propaganda that a strike is an irreparable financial loss to him and that it is to his interest to go back to work as speedily as possible. The leaders of the Taxi Drivers' Organizing Committee in New York did not sufficiently take into account this important peculiarity of the service industries.

These are some of the chief causes and inducements that prompt workers to join back-to-work movements. But the chief cause is lack of understanding of the principles of trade unionism. However, workers learn from their own experiences. In 1936 Remington Rand broke a strike



through the back-to-work movement; in 1947 the same workers broke the back-to-work movement.

### *"Independent Associations" as Fronts*

Who are the sponsors of such movements? At all times they are the employers. Never in any strike was there a genuine back-to-work movement of the workers themselves. A back-to-work movement is planned, manned, financed by the employers. But in public it appears as a real and spontaneous revolt of the workers against strike, leaders, union.

It was not Tom Girdler, or Frank Purnell, President of the Youngstown Sheet & Tube, nor was it "Chowder Head" Cohan or Bergoff who appeared as the public leaders of the Youngstown back-to-work movement. It was a local attorney and a group of former company union representatives who set up an "independent" union for the purpose of initiating this organized scabbery. In Johnstown and Monroe, the mayors of the towns were the puppets. In the Remington Rand strike in Illion, N. Y., a company agent, who was also a union member, was responsible for the organization of the "Committee of Remington Rand Union Members for Democratic Principles," which, in turn organized the back-to-work movement. Many more examples could be cited showing the same pattern: company controlled unions disguised as "independent," lawyers and businessmen, city officials and deserters from union ranks are brought forward by the employers to lead a back-to-work movement.

How does the technique operate?

The first step is forming an "independent" organization.



This is camouflage to give the thing a worker coloration; the appearance of a spontaneous worker movement. In Youngstown, Ohio, at the Republic plant an "Independent Federation of Republic Employees" was set up. In Sheet & Tube an "Independent Society of Workers of the Campbell Plant of the Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co." came into being. Usually such organizations are formed secretly, properly staffed with "loyal" employees, a law office, finances, headquarters and public relations people. Their coming into the open is timed and coordinated with the employers' plan to reopen the mills. In Youngstown, both organizations came out in the open on the same day, June 2, 1937, with public declarations. The Chairman of the Republic "Independents" declared that "as free Americans we have the right to come and go as we wish." Of course, the "federation" had no quarrel with anyone, but "the gates should be free for the workmen to enter if they want to." The Sheet & Tube "Independents" came out with a more elaborate program. They sent out a letter to the thousands of workers employed by that company and the same was reprinted in the local press. The letter read:

DO — YOU — WANT — TO — GO — BACK — TO — WORK?  
IF YOU DO, READ THIS LETTER!

Fellow Workers—Campbell Works, Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co.

The Wagner Labor Act automatically eliminated and abolished the so-called Company Employees' Representation Plan.

An independent organization has been formed and is called the "*Independent Society of Workers*" which, regardless of the outcome of the present labor trouble, intends to and will continue to function as an agency for collective bargaining for its members on all matters involving grievances, labor disputes, wages, rates of pay, hours of employment, vacations with pay and conditions of work.

This is YOUR SOCIETY, governed and controlled by  
men chosen by yourselves—

The "*Independent Society of Workers*" asks you the following questions: (1) Why did we stop working? (2) Who stopped us? (3) Can you afford to be idle and have no income? (4) How long can you hold out? (5) Who loses the most when on strike?

#### DO YOU WANT TO WORK?

The "*Independent Society of Workers*" know a large majority of our fellow workers want to return to work and we can help them.

An office has been opened at Room 215 Dollar Bank Bldg., Central Square.

Come in and register. It's up to you.

(Signed) *Independent Society of Workers*

### *Timing the Back-to-Work Offensive*

This puppet "*Independent Society of Workers*" of the Sheet & Tube Co. offers so good an example of how the back-to-work technique operates that its movements and the collateral strikebreaking movements of the company will be described step by step.

As part of the timing, on the very day the formation of the "*Independents*" was announced, the *Youngstown Vindicator* carried a streamer across the front page: "Girdler Asks Protection for Workers." Mr. Girdler stated that he expected to open the mills "when enough employees want to work and can get to work safely. We don't want them to wade through blood."

In accordance with the Mohawk Valley Formula a public meeting was called two days later. There it was voted to "inform" management, city and state authorities, and above all, the strikers that the back-to-work movement was soon to begin. The next few days were devoted to a barrage against the strike. The "missionaries" got very busy. Signatures were collected on a petition favoring a return to work, and in general every effort was made to

create the impression that the strikers were weakening, and that the "big push" was about to come off.

A few days later, Ray L. Thomas, organizer and spokesman for the back-to-work movement announced that the majority of the strikers had signed up to return to work. On June 16, Mr. Thomas and the leaders of the "loyal employees" met with Mr. Purnell, President of the Sheet & Tube Co., in the presence of a large number of newspapermen. At this well-staged "conference" Mr. Thomas announced that he had 9,000 signatures of employees requesting that they be "allowed to return to work." In reply to this "clamoring" of the employees, the good steel corporation president announced to the press that "my great interest just now is the restoration of payrolls so that our employees may resume their lawful occupations and be enabled to support themselves and their families." Mr. Purnell went on to say that a large number of the employees were pressing the company to open their gates "so that they can go back to work . . . and if we develop that the proper law enforcement officers can give them the protection to which, as citizens and taxpayers, they are entitled, it is of course the logical result." A few hours later, Mr. Lionel Evans, the good Mayor of the town, declared in the press that "if 7,500 or 9,000 men in this valley want to go back to work, I'm going to see the laws are enforced." The stage was set.

In utmost secrecy and in the name of protection from violence supposedly about to be let loose by the strikers, preparations for real acts of violence were being made. Within the mills, machine guns were placed in position. Loads of tear gas were laid out and made ready for use. In the city, the police force was alerted. In the county, the



sheriff deputized more men. Those ready to return to work were armed with revolvers. The city was tense, the people were in a state of expectancy, the strikers were grim and the leaders conscious that "this was it."

Late in the afternoon of Monday, June 22, the *Youngstown Vindicator* appeared on the streets with a double streamer announcing: "Sheet & Tube and Republic to Reopen at 7 A.M. Tuesday." It was like a special back-to-work edition. Both companies carried full page advertisements. The paper also carried a special editorial. It read:

Because of its long record of friendliness to labor, the *Vindicator* can speak without fear of being misunderstood.

Tomorrow Youngstown faces a crisis. Many thousands of men who have been kept out of work against their will are demanding the right to return to the mills. In consequence of this spontaneous demand, the Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co. and the Republic Steel Co. have decided to reopen their plants Tuesday morning.

These men have a right to return to work unmolested. Anyone who interferes with them is no friend of labor but will do labor's cause the greatest possible harm. The public is growing impatient with labor because of the violence of the last few weeks, and it will not stand for any action on the part of strike leaders or sympathizers that will keep men from their jobs.

Tomorrow will be one of the most important days in Youngstown's history. The peaceful return of all who are protesting against enforced idleness will not only reflect the credit the city desires, but will be in the best interests of labor itself.

The back-to-work movement was so well planned and so well organized that provocation and violence against the strikers were inevitable. As the La Follette Committee uncovered later, there were enough munitions inside the mills to turn Youngstown into a virtual battleground. How to avoid bloodshed was the strike leaders' chief concern; they had information that the ringleaders were briefed to



“shoot their way into the mills” if necessary. With this in mind the three local union leaders sent the following telegram to President Roosevelt and Governor Davey:

The Youngstown paper announced today Sheet & Tube and Republic will attempt to reopen Tuesday morning. We can prove to your satisfaction that an overwhelming majority of employees of both plants are members of the CIO and are determined to stay out on strike until both companies sign an agreement. Any attempt to open gates will automatically bring violence and bloodshed. Already two of our men were brutally murdered Saturday evening. Events Saturday evening may be only a skirmish in comparison with the amount of blood that may be shed tomorrow morning. The local authorities are working hand in glove with the steel companies and this makes the situation more threatening and more serious. In the name of God and the overwhelming majority of the steel workers of Youngstown who together with their families represent a majority of the population of this city we urge you to immediately intervene in this critical hour and avoid a calamity and disaster that Ohio may remember for decades to come. We appeal to you to use your good offices to avoid on time the most horrible things that may let loose within the next 24 hours. We are fully aware of all the preparations that the companies have made to break our strike. It is therefore inevitable that disaster will come. We would greatly appreciate a reply from you.

A few days before this wire was sent, Philip Murray had appeared before the Senate Post Office Committee and publicly declared:

In the city of Youngstown a repetition of the Chicago massacre is being prepared by Republic Steel. Sheriff Elser and Mayor Evans have hired special deputies, and all of the thugs and policemen of Republic Steel Corporation. Scores of these thugs have been brought into Youngstown from New York, Pennsylvania and other states. . . . Since May 9, Sheriff Elser has sworn in 332 men. . . . In an astonishingly short space of time, Sheriff Elser has available for these deputies armored trucks, scores of machine guns, other guns, ammunition and stacks of tear gas. The arsenals have been furnished to the sheriff by Republic Steel.

Mr. Murray added that "recourse to local officials in these cases afforded no relief, because of their complete tie-up with the officials of the steel corporations."

The news of planned bloodshed in Youngstown, against a background of the Chicago massacre, spread throughout the industrial towns of Ohio and Pennsylvania. Rubber workers from Akron, steel workers from nearby mining towns rushed to Youngstown to help their embattled brothers. To prevent such reinforcements for the strikers, city and county authorities blocked all highways leading to Youngstown. Within a matter of hours, hundreds of workers were jailed. The prosecutor announced that the jail was packed.

The lines were drawn. The strikers were at a great disadvantage because they were unarmed, but they had no intention of retreating. Before dawn broke, many of them bid farewell to their families and walked off to the picket lines as though going to war.

As zero hour approached, in reply to the appeal of the steel workers, President Roosevelt made a special plea to the steel masters asking them not to open the mills. At the very last minute Governor Davey ordered the National Guard to Youngstown with instructions to keep the mills closed. It looked like victory for the workers. But a few days later the governor, yielding to pressure, betrayed the steel workers; the mills opened under the protection of the troops.

### *"The Right to Work" Propaganda*

This is how the Mohawk Valley Formula was translated into action in Youngstown. There remained only to put on

the finishing touches, for which the formula prescribes the following procedure:

*"Close the publicity barrage, which day by day during the entire period has increased demoralization worked by all of these measures, on the theme that the plant is in full operation and that the strikers were merely a minority attempting to interfere with the right to work, thus inducing the public to place a moral stamp of approval upon the above measures. With this, the campaign is over—the employer has broken the strike."*

The "right to work" versus the right to strike has been raised by employers as a major issue in most strikes where the Mohawk Valley Formula has been applied. As has been pointed out in a previous chapter, this is sheer hypocrisy. Actually, the glittering phrase "the right to work" is invoked in time of strike not to champion but to defeat labor's most elementary desire: the right always to earn a decent living and have security on the job. The slogan "the right to work" is just part of the effort to make strike-breaking legal and moral. It is popularized to get moral sanction for any man to work so long as he will go to work as a strikebreaker. It is a slogan intended to confuse and mislead workers, but more especially the public at large.

To expose the hypocrisy of this slogan in time of strike the union can bring to mind what the employers thought about "the right to work" in depression days. They can ask the public to remember how in the days of unemployment the manufacturers' association fought against government financed work projects, fought against unemployment insurance, fought against any other aid to the unemployed.



The union can also announce that it is taking a "rain check" on the "right to work." That is what the Cone-maugh Valley Lodge of the Steel Workers Union did. A few months after the 1937 Bethlehem steel strike in Johnstown, hundreds of workers were laid off and thousands were working only two or three days a week. The union put out a leaflet with the title "What About the Right to Work Now?" In this leaflet the union declared:

Not so many weeks ago, we were told about the sacred right to work. The powers that be volunteered us protection if we desired to work.

What about the right to work now? Thousands of men laid off or working part time!

Our union believes in the sacred right to work. We urge you to call on the Citizens' Committee, the Chamber of Commerce, the Mayor of Johnstown, the company officials and—demand the right to work.

Is the right to work a right which exists only when the company chooses to permit us to enjoy it?

Is it a right which can be taken from us at any time when the company chooses? Doesn't the company owe us some explanation of the present lay-off and the reduction of working time?

Where are the people who willingly contributed thousands of dollars to protect us in our right to work? We see no full page advertisements now demanding that we be allowed to continue at our jobs in the mill.

We see no businessmen calling at the company office to complain that their business is being hurt because we are not allowed to work. Their business is being hurt as much as at any other time when we were not working. Why are they making no demands for us now?

Think these things over, Brothers, and we are sure you will be able to decide who really are your friends. Organize! Build a UNION wall around your right to work. Demand not only the right to work but also the right to fair play and honest collective bargaining.



## *Remington Rand Workers Defeat the Formula*

When a back-to-work movement succeeds, very often the strike fails. But this is equally true in reverse; when the employers' back-to-work campaign is defeated, the strike is virtually won. What has been the experience of unions which have defeated the application of this most dangerous part of the Mohawk Valley Formula? How have they done it?

The 1947 Remington Rand strike is an excellent example of how the formula can be licked. The example is all the more convincing because the Mohawk Valley Formula, born in a previous Remington Rand strike, had eleven years earlier won a victory over the same workers.

On June 18, 1947, the Remington Rand workers went out on strike for a fifteen cent wage increase—following the wage pattern of most unions at that time. The 14,000 Remington Rand workers were well organized. Most of the plants had contracts with the UE and some with the International Association of Machinists.

From the very start the company flirted with the idea of a back-to-work movement. In Illion, N. Y., on the day of the walkout, Harold Day, manager of Plant 1, declared in the press: "The gates are open to any who want to go back to work." The *Utica Observer-Dispatch* elaborated on this statement and bewailed the lack of a leader. Many "would pass the picket lines if somebody started the movement," it declared. Actually the company had already selected a person to lead such a back-to-work movement.

Unlike 1936, when the employers had passed the assignment on to a private detective agency, the job of breaking the strike was given to John O'Connor, who for a period of

years had operated inside the union, where at one time he had gained the confidence of the workers so far that he was elected a shop steward of Local 334, UE. O'Connor had begun to show his colors prior to the strike. During the negotiations he made several attempts to disrupt, confuse and undermine the union. As a result he was tried by his union, found guilty of disruption and permanently expelled. Management considered this person just the man for the role of a back-to-work leader.

Twenty days after the strike began, Remington Rand was ready to initiate the back-to-work movement in accordance with its own creation, the Mohawk Valley Formula. O'Connor together with several other "loyal" employees set up a committee, one of the first actions of which was to call a rump meeting for the purpose of stimulating and initiating a back-to-work movement. The union lost no time in striking back. It immediately exposed this employer move. In a statement to the press, the union denounced the projected meeting as a "deliberate company inspired and financed scheme by desperate men to launch a strikebreaking movement." The union charged that the whole affair was designed to instigate and promote violence and bloodshed in the Mohawk Valley. Furthermore, the union declared that it had evidence that would establish clearly and indisputably the fact that Mr. William E. Shorten, vice-president in charge of industrial relations for Remington Rand, had been conspiring with John O'Connor and had "extended large sums of money and assistance of professional strikebreakers to O'Connor's group" in order to break the strike.

This timely public exposure of the rump meeting immediately alerted the strikers and the community and

placed responsibility for the violence that inevitably accompanies back-to-work movements where it belonged. At the same time, the strike leaders called for a reinforcement of all picket lines. On the day of the meeting called by O'Connor's committee, a crowd of pickets arrived at the meeting place and staged an excellent demonstration. While hundreds of pickets stayed outside, others entered the meeting hall and spoke for the strikers. In addition, the union issued a leaflet exposing O'Connor and the true purpose of the meeting. The leaflet did not mince words. It read as follows:

YOU MAY BE HERE AS ONE WHO FEELS THAT THIS "back-to-work" IS THE ACTION OF HONEST WORKERS. Don't be deceived! Don't let individuals like O'Connor who are being paid by the Company, use you for their reckless and strikebreaking adventures! O'Connor and several of those working with him are being directed and financed by Remington Rand, Inc. and *never have denied it*. They are trying to use YOU in their union busting game. YOU will suffer in your wages and working conditions while they will be paid for their services in selling their fellow workers out. They are trying to confuse YOU and any others that they can find to take the brunt for their sinister acts. Don't let them make a SUCKER out of YOU!

YOU MAY BE HERE AS A SPECTATOR . . . expecting something to happen. Look around and see how many of those who are talking about "going back" you recognize as Plant 1 workers. You will see faces you have never seen before . . . strikebreakers imported here by Remington Rand to deliberately provoke violence and bloodshed into the peaceful and orderly strike situation.

YOU MAY BE HERE AS A FOREMAN OR CLERICAL WORKER NOT PART OF THE BARGAINING UNIT. You too have a stake in this strike. This morning the Company is trying to use *you* to attempt to break the strike. They will try and use you without regard to what may happen to you or others as a result of their plans to provoke trouble and violence.

Management and its back-to-work leaders were not



fully satisfied that their strikebreaking move was a failure. Several days later, another attempt was made. This time the company worked on all cylinders in its attempt to drum up support for such a movement. The so-called "Employees Committee" in a paid advertisement in the local newspaper called upon the workers to go back to work July 14 at 8 A.M., rain or shine. On the same day, Remington Rand placed a "come on in and go to work" advertisement in the same local paper.

The union realized that the strike would be decided that morning. Determined to "bury the Mohawk formula," the union assembled 1,500 pickets in front of the plants at daybreak. Long picket lines began to circle. The strike leaders were there, the sound trucks were assembled, first-aid stations had been set up. Every man's mind was made up that no strikebreakers should pass that picket line.

And they did not. The few misguided workers who came with the thought of entering the plant changed their mind the minute they saw the pickets. Michael Jiminez, leader of the strike, addressed the great gathering. "Do you want to go back to work?" A roar of "No's" was the reply. "Do you want to be betrayed by men like O'Connor?" Another roar of "No's." Then Jiminez asked O'Connor whether he had anything to say, and if so, to speak up then, because there was the sound truck and he was welcome to use it.

Beaten, O'Connor went to the microphone. "To all people assembled here who want to go back to work," he said. "There will be no attempt to enter the gates this morning."

So ended the back-to-work movement. Ten days later,



Mr. James Rand, author of the great Mohawk Valley Formula, admitted defeat in applying his brainchild to his own workers and acceded to the demands of the union.

What happened in Remington Rand can be successfully repeated in other strikes providing strike leaders react to back-to-work movements quickly and resolutely. Under every set of circumstances, the best and only answer to such movements is a speedy mobilization of the rank and file and the community at large.

*P A R T F O U R*



## Strike Leadership

### *We Don't Have Enough*

**D**ESPITE the great numerical strength of the American trade union movement and the thousands of men and women who devote their full time to union work, there are not many who have emerged as strike leaders of national stature. There are valid reasons why.

Up to the enactment of the Wagner Act and the birth of the CIO, there were no large-scale organizing campaigns and therefore no major strikes. Old-time leaders were content with small unions, mostly craft in composition and operating in small industrial establishments. Under such circumstances, it could hardly be expected that a strike leadership of national stature would emerge.

Furthermore, for a number of years, and particularly in the twenties, the dominant tactic of the majority of the trade union leaders was collaboration. The strike was considered a "primitive weapon" that belonged to "the days of



the jungle." Labor leaders advocated a "higher strategy"—collaboration and even "partnership" with the employers. Unions were ready to offer greater efficiency, increased production, and elimination of waste in return for a collective bargaining agreement. That certainly was no atmosphere for the development of a strike leadership. Such leadership as did emerge was in keeping with the character of the strike—both were on a local level.

Curiously the same pattern persists today. Today, when industry-wide strikes on a national scale are a common occurrence, strike leaders still retain their local character. Men and women come forward in their communities, become outstanding local strike leaders, but remain at that level. At the same time national union leaders have assumed more and more the role of negotiators rather than of strike leaders.

What is the reason for this condition?

A lack of dynamic personalities in the leadership of the unions may have a lot to do with it. Present-day labor leaders for the most part have little of the crusader about them. They resemble businessmen much more. A large number actually live as businessmen do rather than like the workers they represent, and this is not without its effect. There has been an all around softening up process. Old-time labor leaders were softened up by the "higher strategy" and business unionism, while many of the younger and more articulate leaders of CIO unions were softened up because their unions achieved collective bargaining not through picket lines but through Labor Board elections.

But perhaps as much as anything, the reason for the lack of outstanding strike leaders on a national scale is labor's

failure to take up in its educational programs a consistent study of strike strategy. Not even unions with progressive leadership have done this. Yet an elementary knowledge of when and how to apply labor's most powerful weapon would go far toward molding strike leaders who are confident and who in turn inspire confidence because they know what they are doing and why.

### *Leadership Qualifications*

Leading a strike is never a one-man project. It is a collective effort. Although it often appears that a certain individual union leader is running everything, it takes a team of leaders, each responsible for a different phase of activity, to handle a strike. What qualifications are required of the men and women who make up this team?

First and foremost, there must be undivided loyalty and devotion to the union and its membership. The team must be composed of people with proved and tested records of struggle. They must be men and women with courage and steadfastness and endurance. The background of strike leaders cannot be ignored. The union not only has a right but a duty to review the past life of potential strike leaders. Certainly men who scabbed in the past, or who were employed by private detective agencies, should first prove themselves as loyal rank and file strikers before they are promoted to leadership. Likewise persons with past criminal records, even if completely rehabilitated, could at times do damage to a strike. It has happened in the past that employers and the press played up such individual records in order to alienate public opinion. Such people's abilities could be utilized without their becoming part of

a strike leadership. Strike leaders must be like Caesar's wife—beyond suspicion.

The capacity to win and hold workers' confidence stands high on the list of qualifications for strike leadership. Rank and file workers are oftentimes not vocal, but beneath their silence there is clear thinking and sound judgment of the men in front. It is only when the workers know their leaders well and have basic confidence in the leadership that they will give the strike a maximum, instead of token, support.

Self-control is another quality very important for strike leadership. During moments of great provocation on the part of employers or their hired agents or scabs, a leader must remain calm. It takes more courage at times not to fall for provocative acts than to lead head on into danger. Calm also means not to be overwhelmed by the multitude of problems thrown into the lap of strike leaders every minute of the day. The ability to remain calm under trying circumstances plus the ability to make correct spot decisions and resolutely carry them out are at the core of leadership.

Another quality a strike leader must have is the knack of delegating responsibility to the right people. The secret of this, of course, is to assign to people the task they know best. To ask a man who has native abilities as a speaker to take charge of picketing, and to give a man who has organizing abilities an assignment as a speaker, is not to get the best out of either.

It is very rare that any one person can possess all the attributes and qualities outlined above. This is one of the reasons why it is better that a strike be led by a team rather than by a single individual. One is a spokesman, an-



other is the organizer, still another is the public relations man. When the efforts of all are combined, unified, and coordinated, the strike is assured of a satisfactory leadership.

One word more. A strike leadership to be most effective must reflect the composition of the workers involved. It should have representation of both skilled and unskilled workers, as well as departmental representation. A strike including Negro and women workers should have representation from each group.

### *General Guide for Strike Leaders*

For the convenience of local union leaders there is presented below a chart or blueprint of a strike plan. In the event it becomes obvious that a strike is inevitable—all possibilities of a settlement without a strike having been exhausted—union leaders can follow this plan, taking from it whatever is applicable to their conditions and circumstances. It should be remembered that proper timing is the key to success. In seasonal industries, to plan a strike at the end of the season is to invite a long strike. If conditions are such that the union is free to choose when the strike shall take place, it is obviously to the advantage of the union to strike at the beginning of the season.

#### *A. Preparations for the strike*

1. Call a meeting of the workers involved and present an honest and accurate report on all the efforts the union has made to settle the dispute without a strike. The entire union machinery must be put to work in preparing for this general membership meeting.



2. At this meeting a vote should be taken on whether or not to strike. If the members vote to strike, the next point on the order of business is to set up the leading strike committees. It may be advisable to have the officers or the Executive Board bring in recommendations for such committees.

3. Carefully examine the attendance record of the meeting or meetings. If a substantial group of workers failed to attend such an important meeting or meetings, do not take it lightly. Those workers must be reached through the mails, by visitation, or through a special meeting.

4. Issue a statement to the press announcing the impending strike because of the employer's stubborn resistance to reach an agreement across the conference table. In the statement stress the needs of the workers, the demands of the union, and make an appeal to the public.

5. Meet with the leaders of the key committees and check on their plans and personnel. Pay special attention to the picketing plan.

6. If there is need for additional strike headquarters, these must be rented before the strike and properly equipped. There should be a telephone, chairs, and first aid supplies. A reliable striker should be appointed to take charge.

7. If the strike is of major proportions in the community, consider the idea of a radio address, an advertisement in the newspapers, or a handbill to the public presenting the union's point of view.

8. A committee consisting of the most authoritative union officers and members should visit the mayor, the city councilmen, and leaders of the church, veteran, and

other civic organizations to explain the issues and solicit their good will and support.

9. A similar committee should visit the AFL and CIO central bodies and labor unions.

10. Alert the union attorneys and put them to work on legal matters, such as unemployment insurance, instructions to pickets, and analyzing city ordinances that could be applied to strike situations. Also arrangements must be made in advance with bonding companies for bail in the event of arrests.

11. Call a meeting of the Executive Board and see to it that a sufficient sum of money is allocated for various phases of strike action.

12. Send an official report on the pending strike to your International and outline your needs and how the International could assist you.

13. Meet with the person in charge of security and check if proper measures have been taken to protect union offices, strike leaders, and strike headquarters.

14. Make sure that "coffee and" stations will be set up and ready to serve as soon as picketing begins.

### *B. On strike day*

1. Determine the exact hour and minute of the walk-out. If possible, take advantage of the element of surprise. The effectiveness of this tactic depends on the ability of strike leaders to select the right tactic for their particular situation.

2. Make certain that the information about the exact time for the walkout will reach the shop stewards or others especially appointed to lead the walkout so that confusion will be reduced to a minimum.

3. If the policy is for the workers to go into the plants and work a few hours, arrange that union organizers will meet the strikers as they come out. If the policy is not to report to work, then a strong picket line must be thrown around all entrances.

4. Arrange to have detailed printed or mimeographed instructions to the strikers distributed the day the strike is declared.

5. If at all possible, arrange a strike meeting somewhere near the plant or in a specially hired hall.

6. Have the leaders of the various committees get busy on soliciting workers to join their committees.

7. The registration of strikers and the issuing of picket cards must be properly planned and carried through within 48 hours after the strike is declared.

8. If the walkout turns out to be below expectation, particularly if there is danger that production or services have not been fully discontinued, act immediately and decisively to eliminate this weakness.

### *C. Conduct of the strike*

1. Proper timing is as important in conducting as in preparing for a strike. Go carefully into the question of when to introduce mass picketing. Determine also on what occasion dramatization shall be introduced.

2. Maintain discipline at all times. Not only the strikers but the employer, the scabs, the press and all others connected with the strike must be given to understand unequivocally that they have to deal with a body of disciplined fighters. Do not hesitate to remove strikers or union officers from positions of strike leadership when instructions are violated. Do not permit incompetent people,

men who show cowardice or are corrupt, to remain in positions of responsibility. The strikers will respect their leaders for taking all necessary steps to maintain discipline.

3. Keep a finger on the strike pulse. It is of prime importance to be able at all times to evaluate the strength or weakness of the strike. On the basis of such evaluation great decisions have to be made. Go carefully into the following questions, remembering always that proper timing in discussing them is in itself of decisive importance:

- a. How long can the men hold out?
- b. Shall the union take the initiative in calling for negotiations?
- c. Is it in the interest of the workers to accept arbitration or mediation?
- d. Should the strike be spread to other plants?

#### *D. Do's and Don'ts for strike leaders*

1. Keep in close contact with the strikers so that you may know fully the sentiments of the workers. Leaders who lock themselves up in hotel rooms or union offices and get their information through other organizers are bound to make costly mistakes. Mingle with the workers in strike halls and meet with various strike committees.

2. Lead by example. Spend several hours a day on the picket line. Our soldiers resented officers who were far away from the battlefield and called such officers "U.S.O. Commandos." The American Communications Association presents an excellent example of leadership in this respect. During the Western Union strike President Joseph Selly and other international officers accepted, in addition to their other duties, regular daily assignments on the



picket lines, including tours ranging from one to three hours on the sound truck.

3. Be ready to do anything and everything that will help win the strike. You cannot ask a striker to do what you yourself are not ready to do.

4. Be ready to make at least the same financial sacrifices that the workers make. In some unions—all too few—the officers give up their salaries during the course of the strike.

5. Be courageous and steadfast in the face of enemy attacks. This does not mean displaying bravado or taking unnecessary risks. A wise leader avoids running into useless and unnecessary danger.

6. Let your personal conduct be beyond reproach. Refrain from drinking. Stop all personal association with people connected with management. Refuse to hold private conferences with employer representatives unless such conferences have been approved by the leading strike committee.

7. Be earnest and resolute in your daily work. The whole strike organization must be permeated with a spirit of determination and seriousness.

8. Be firm. Strike leaders must expect great pressures upon them, both public and private. They may come from the White House, the governor, the press and a hundred other sources. To withstand such pressures and hold fast until victory is certain calls for uncompromising integrity, doggedness and determination. But nothing less will do. One of the chief reasons why John L. Lewis and Harry Bridges have had so much success is that they possess such qualities.

## *Winding Up the Struggle*

Part of good strike strategy is knowing when and how to settle a strike. The right decisions cannot be arrived at by guess or hunch or instinct. To do the right thing at this point requires a correct balancing of strengths and weaknesses, both those of the union and those of the employer.

The first thing in approaching a settlement is to be absolutely sure about what the main objectives of the strike were and about the necessity of fighting for those objectives during negotiations. Negotiations call for firmness. But they also call for flexibility. Negotiators must be sure what they can and what they cannot be flexible about. In this connection William Z. Foster long ago established a formula that can well apply to most strikes. He warned that the workers' negotiators "must be on watch against a maze of dangers, and yet be prepared to utilize every possible advantage. They must know the relative value of their own demands and also those of the employers. They must understand which are the 'bargaining points' and which are fundamental in the given situation. They must learn how to advance their main demands by sacrificing non-essentials, and how to prevent the employers from doing this."

It will not be amiss to repeat at this point what was said earlier: the rank and file must actively participate in the direct negotiations for a settlement. The workers should elect as their negotiators the most honest, informed, experienced and determined union members. It is an established fact that many a time the presence of rank and file workers at the conference table has been a large factor in gaining the union's demands.

Negotiations for partial settlement present special difficulties and call for the exercise of great judgment. Often the problem is a very decisive one for a union to face; a partial settlement is fraught with dangerous possibilities and can prove disastrous. In the coal strike of 1922, for example, the signing of a separate agreement would have ruined that great struggle. A separate agreement would have flooded the market with Illinois coal and would have signalized the failure of the union to get control of the whole central competitive field. Fortunately, the leader of the Illinois coal miners, Farrington—later exposed as an agent of the coal miners—did not succeed in signing the agreement.

Generally speaking, partial settlements in the basic industries must be a last resort. In more competitive and lighter industries partial settlements can be applied more frequently and even to the advantage of the unions as a whole. A good example is offered by a painters' strike in the thirties in New York. Faced with stubborn resistance of the employers' association, the painters union opened the door to individual settlements, thus breaking the solid front of the employers.

The problem of arbitration is another one that often looms big in the final stages of strikes. Organized labor was and is opposed in principle to compulsory arbitration. Only among the railroads has it gained a foothold. Both the AFL and the CIO stubbornly fought and defeated the attempt of reactionary congressmen to pass compulsory arbitration legislation. However, there are other forms of arbitration that are very dangerous, and sometimes it is not possible to avoid them. While it is true that the offer to arbitrate often comes from the employer because he

realizes the workers are too strong for him and that he cannot smash the strike and destroy the union, the union cannot, in the knowledge of its strength, simply make a flat rejection. A flat rejection on its part may put the union in a very unfavorable light. But in accepting some form of arbitration, the union must protect itself as much as it can; it should at least guarantee for itself a voice in the selection of arbitrators.

An example of good strategy in a situation where a union felt it had to accept arbitration or be placed in a bad light is to be found in one of the earlier New York bus strikes. The leadership of the Transport Workers Union found an excellent solution: the union accepted arbitration with the stipulation that there could be no downward revision of conditions; the company involved agreed that the points in the old agreement (closed shop, checkoff, vacations with pay, etc.) would remain. The result was a million dollar wage increase.

### *Organized Retreat*

Winding up a strike calls for a great deal of wisdom. But the demands on the leadership are nowhere near as great when a strike is won, or partly won, as when it is lost. And many a major strike has ended in defeat; when workers enter a battle, they have no guarantee that victory is certain.

Unfortunately, many leaders have not been equal to the demands. It has entirely too often happened that when a strike has been lost, labor leaders abandoned the field and left the workers at the mercy of ruthless corporations. It would seem that those leaders had no conception of



*organized retreat* when there was no hope of victory. For instance, conservative union leaders have very seldom officially called off a strike. The consequence of this bad handling is that great harm has been done to organized labor.

In the event a strike ends in defeat, the union's first duty is to take care of those courageous workers who suffered most—the jailed, the blacklisted, the hungry. A union cannot abandon the field when the battle has been lost; it has an obligation to stay and pick up the wounded. After the 1919 Steel Strike was called off, Foster kept the commissary system going for another three weeks to take care of the thousands of workers left hungry and without work. It was a great act of solidarity. This tradition was revived after the 1937 “Little Steel” strike. When that strike was over, the union did not desert the workers. It maintained its organizing staffs in Youngstown, Warren, Canton, South Chicago, Cleveland and other “Little Steel” centers. The steel union is now reaping the fruits of its good work. Notwithstanding the loss of the strike, such a powerful organization grew up in all the “Little Steel” plants that Tom Girdler was finally forced to surrender.

### *Building on Victory*

To consolidate a victory is no less important than to stand by after a defeat. American labor history teaches us that strike victories are never secure. The employers have never ceased trying to weaken the workers' standard of living or to break the unions, and so long as our system of private ownership continues they never will. Organizing campaigns, Labor Board elections, strikes, lockouts, settle-

ments and their aftermath will be part of the American scene for a long time to come. A strike victory therefore does not mean that a union may sit back and rest on its laurels. It must consolidate the victory. It must use the victory first of all to build the organization, more especially if the workers involved were hitherto unorganized. After an important strike is won, splendid opportunities open up for extending union organization into the unorganized sections of the industry, or other industries. That is what the Akron rubber workers were thinking of when, upon completion of one of their great and victorious strikes, they raised the slogan: "transferring the picket lines inside the plants." They understood that a victory is not an end but a beginning, a springboard to ever greater organization, which means ever greater victories.

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## Roll Call of the Dead

(Compiled from records tabulated in  
the *Labor Fact Books* of the Labor  
Research Association)

### 1934

*Pezzy Adkins* was a Kentucky miner, 45 years old. He was killed by a gunman on January 29 during a strike in the Edgewater Coal Co.

*Paul Mehalic*, a youth of 17 in Latrobe, Pa. He was interested in seeing a picket line of workers at the Latrobe Electric Steel Co. strike. On May 1 a deputy shot him dead.

*Murphy Humphrey*, a 21-year-old Negro longshoreman at Lake Charles, La., was killed on May 2, during a longshore strike.

*Rich Foster* and *Henry Witt*, two Alabama Negro ore miners, were murdered on May 9, during the strike at the Raimund Ore Mine of Republic Steel. The day after, two other Negro ore miners, *George Bell* and *W. H. Ford*, were shot down in cold blood by "special officers" of Jefferson County, Alabama.

*Charles Sharlo* was a Negro longshoreman. On May 12 he was on picket duty in front of the Clyde-Mallory Line in Galveston, Texas, when a deputy's bullet ended his life.

*Ed Higgins*, a Negro miner, the secretary of his local union in Empire, Ala., was killed on May 14, during a miners' strike.

*Richard Parker*, 20 years old, and *John Knudsen* were killed by police officers during the longshore strike in San Pedro, Cal.

*Frank Norman*, a union organizer, was kidnaped by a group of vigilantes in Lakeland, Fla., and brutally murdered on May 14.

*Frank Hubay* and *Steve Cyigon*, two unemployed youths, were killed on May 24 by National Guardsmen, during the Electric Auto-Lite strike in Toledo, Ohio.

*Otto Helland*, killed by a policeman, during a longshore strike in Smith Cove, Washington.

*Eugene Domagalaski*, a youth of 24 who sympathized with the Milwaukee streetcar men on strike. On June 28 he was electrocuted by high tension wires at the Lakeside power plant.

*Shelby Daffron* was a longshoreman on strike at Point Wells, Wash. On July 1, he was killed by Standard Oil guards.

*Howard Sperry* was a striker and *Nick Bordoio* was a sympathizer during the famous San Francisco longshore strike. Both were killed by police officers on July 5.

*Henry B. Ness*, a striker during the truck drivers' strike in Minneapolis. On July 20 he met his death from a police bullet. On August 1, *John Belor*, another striker, died in a similar manner.

*Leo Wakefield* and *Henry Engleman* were two young workers at the Kohler Co. in Kohler, Wis., who joined the rest of the workers in a strike. On July 27 they were both murdered by deputy sheriffs.

*Reuben Saunders* lost his life on August 10, during the Georgia Webbing & Tape Co. strike in Columbus, Ga.

*J. V. Blalock* of Rome, Ga., was a sympathizer of the textile workers who were then engaged in a national textile strike. He was killed on September 5 in Trion, Ga. This was to be the first of many victims in that strike. On September 6, nine workers were murdered: *Leon Carrol* was killed by a police officer in Trion, Ga.; *John Black* was shot down by a deputy sheriff in Greenville, S. C.; *R. T. Yarborough*, *Lee Crawford*, *E. M. Knight*, *Ira Davis*, *Claude Cannon*, *C. L. Rucker*, and *Maxie Peterson* were all strikers shot by guards at the Chiquola Mills, Honea Path, S. C. During the same textile strike, on September 12, *Jude Courtemanche*, 19 years old, was killed in Woonsocket, R. I., and *Charles Gozcynski*, an 18-year-old striker, was killed on the same day in nearby Saylesville, R. I. A week later, *Ernest K. Riley* was killed on the picket line in Belmont, N. C., by a National Guardsman, and a few days later the National Guards killed *Leo Route*, another 18-year-old textile striker in



Woonsocket, R. I. The following week *William Blackwood* met his death in Saylesville, R. I.

*Ed Woolens* and *H. C. Collins*, Negro coal miners, were killed by deputy sheriffs of Jefferson County, Ala., on their way to a UMW rally on September 16.

*Joseph Piskonowicz* was killed by a policeman while picketing a bakery in Chicago on September 21.

*Elwood Quirk*, a 23-year-old textile worker, who was a spectator of the strike at James Lees & Sons in Bridgeport, Pa., was killed by a deputy sheriff on October 3.

## 1935

*Columbus Walker* was murdered by a scab on February 3, during the Richmond Hosiery Mills strike in Rossville, Ga.

*Frank Petrosky*, a young coal miner, was shot and killed by a scab on February 14, during the strike at the Woodward Colliery in Luzerne County, Pa.

*Paul Knight* of Santa Maria and *Kenneth Eldridge* of Westmoreland, Cal., were murdered by vigilantes on February 17, during an agricultural workers' strike.

*Andy Latiska*, 30, of Port Homer, Ohio, father of two children, was killed by a guard on April 17, during a strike at the Kaul Clay Co., in Toronto, Ohio.

*Ray Morency*, 32, vice-president of the warehousemen's local union in Stockton, Cal., was murdered on April 27 by Charles Gray, son of the owner of the trucking company where the union had called a strike.

*William Usatalo*, a picket at the Marinoff Northwest Brewery, Portland, Ore., was killed by a guard on May 11.

*Fonie Stephens*, striker, was killed by National Guardsmen during an attack on the picket line, May 11, in front of the Callaway Mills at Lagrange, Ga.

*Willie Foster*, a Negro organizer of the International Labor Defense, was murdered on May 20 while investigating acts of violence during a cotton choppers' strike at Selma, Ala. The mob secretly buried him.

*George Melhelm*, a 66-year-old bystander, was killed on June 13 by Republic Steel Guards, during the Berger Mfg. Co. strike in Canton, Ohio.

*John W. Duster*, a bystander, met his death during a police attack on streetcar strikers in Omaha, Neb., on June 17.

*William Kaarte*, a lumber striker of the Holmes-Eureka lumber mill at Eureka, Cal., was killed by a policeman on June 21. Two days later, *Harold Edlund*, another lumber striker, was killed in a similar manner. Next week a third striker, *Paul Lampelli*, lost his life during a police attack on the strikers.

*Joe Spinner Johnson*, a leader of the Sharecroppers Union in Greensboro, Ala., was found murdered in a nearby swamp on July 11. Eight days later, *J. P. Merriweather*, a Negro leader of this union in Lowndes County, Ala., was brutally murdered during a cottonpickers' strike.

*Gertrude Kelly*, mother of two children, was killed on September 2, during a strike at the Pelzer Mfg. Co., Pelzer, S. C.

*Edward Bracey*, a Negro member of the Sharecroppers Union at Hope Hill Ala., was murdered by a group of vigilantes on September 3, during another cottonpickers' strike. Nine days later *Smith Wadkins*, another active Negro member of this union, was found dead in a swamp in Calhoun County, Ala., his body riddled with bullets.

*Eugene Casper*, 18, and *Melvin Bjorklund*, 21, were innocent bystanders during a police attack on strikers on September 12 at the Flour City Ornamental Iron Works in Minneapolis. When the attack was over these two young men were dead.

*Herman Slater*, 41, milk strike picket, was shot down while picketing on October 5 with 200 farmers just north of the Wisconsin state line.

*Henry Jones*, 42, Negro maritime striker, was killed by a police bullet on October 5, in New Orleans.

*William L. Polley*, a well-known Socialist and union leader in Kansas City, was attacked and killed by thugs on October 13, after a teamsters' strike had been decided upon.

*Samuel Dowdell*, a Negro member of the UMWA employed at the Hamilton Slope Mine near Birmingham, joined his fellow miners in a strike. On October 16 he was murdered by a scab of the Tennessee Coal & Iron Co.

*Etienne Christ*, 34, was killed on October 21 at Port Arthur, Texas, during a marine strike.

*Virgie Thomas*, Negro mine union striker, was ambushed and shot down by "persons unknown" on October 28.

*Ernest Dukes*, Negro longshoreman, member of the I.L.A. in Mobile, Ala., was marching on the picket line on October 31 when a policeman killed him.

*Ralph Ratliff*, 26, and *Estill Damron*, 20, striking members of the UMWA, were killed on November 3 by a strikebreaker and a sheriff, near Pikeville, Ky.

*Sam Brandt*, 21-year-old member of the I.L.A. in Houston, Texas, was active in the Gulf Marine Strike. He was killed on November 25.

*Carl Swanson*, 26, a striker, was shot and killed by a foreman of the Motor Products Corp. on December 15.

## 1936

*James Ray*, 35, and *William Blackwood*, 40, were on strike and were picketing the Crown Williamette Logging Company at Seaside, Ore. On March 7 they were killed by strikebreakers.

*Arthur Whitelock* was the business agent of the Ice, Coal and Water Wagon Drivers Union in Cleveland, Ohio. He was leading a strike when on May 13 he was murdered by gangsters.

*Otto Krueger* was a spectator of a picket line during a strike at the Acme Braid Co. at Closter, N. J., when on September 26 a foreman fired at him and killed him.

*Willard Bois* was an active marine unionist in Baltimore, Md. On November 24 he went to a union meeting and never returned home. Shortly after he was found dead.

*John Kane* was on a strike conducted by the Marine Transport Workers Union in Houston, Texas. In December he was killed by a scab.

*James Young*, a spectator, and *Peter Martin*, a picket during a Sun Shipbuilding Company strike at Chester, Pa., died on December 11 after fire trucks attacked the strikers.

## 1937

### *Victims of the "Little Steel" Strike:*

*Alfred Causy*, 43, Republic striker; *Kenneth Reed*, 23, Inland Steel striker; *Earl Handley*, 40; *Sam Popovich*; *Joseph Rothmund*, 47, WPA worker (died May 31); *Anthony Tagliori*, 26, Republic striker (died June 1); *Hilding Johnson* (died June 3); *Otis Jones*,



43, picket (died June 8); *Leo Francisco* (died June 15); *Lee Tisdale*, Negro striker (died June 19). All the above were victims of the Memorial Day police attack on pickets at South Chicago. *John Bogovich* and *James Espereji* met their death in Youngstown, Ohio, when on June 19 the police and Republic thugs opened fire against the steel strikers. *Chrisanto Lopez*, a steel striker in Canton, Ohio, was killed by National Guardsmen on June 30. In Cleveland *John Orecony*, 45, a picket at Republic Steel, was crushed to death when on July 26 a strikebreaker's car ran over him. *Nick Valdoso*, 45, and *Fugencio Colzada*, 27, Republic Steel pickets, were killed in Massillon, Ohio.

*John Cephas*, a Negro striker, was fatally injured by a truck attacking pickets on June 25, in front of the Phillips Packing Co. in Cambridge, Md.

*Anthony Corbo*, 42, lost his life on June 25 during a strike at the Fein Tin Can Co. in Brooklyn, N. Y.

*Joseph Jozwiak*, 42, was killed on the picket line on July 6 by a strikebreaker in front of the Lloyd Mfg. Co. in Menominee, Mich.

*Henson Klick*, 30, a union picket, was killed by a policeman on July 7, in front of the plant of the Aluminum Company of America, in Alcoa, Tenn.

## 1938

*Patrick Travis*, 48, a member of the NMU, was attacked and killed on February 1 by a "special patrolman" of the Seamen's House in New York. Travis had taken an active part in two strikes.

*Lester Smithers*, a union miner, was killed in Harlan, Ky., on June 9 by a Harlan Central Coal Co. representative for testifying against the company in a government trial. On July 13, also at Harlan, Ky., another union miner, *Charles Reno*, was shot by a deputy sheriff.

*Raymond Cooke*, 35, a member of the American Federation of Hosiery Workers in Hatboro, Pa., was shot by the chief of police in front of the Oscar Nebel Co., Inc., hosiery mill on July 13. The shot was fired straight into the picket line.

*Ramona Lucero*, a child of 13, daughter of a striker, died from shock of attack on July 13, when a group of vigilantes broke into her home.



## 1939

*John Abrams*, 24, a coal mine picket, was shot during a strike at the Reitler mine in Ostego, Ohio, on April 27.

*John Charlton*, a union member, was murdered on June 6 by a company slugger during a packing house strike at the Iowa Packing Co. in Des Moines, Iowa.

*Dock Caldwell*, 31, a miner, was killed by a National Guardsman in an attack on a UMWA picket line on July 12, at the Mahan-Ellison Coal Co. in Harlan, Ky.

*Bill Roberts*, 35, a union miner, was shot by a Mahan-Ellison Coal Co. strikebreaker on July 15 in Stanfield, Ky.

*Frank Bryant*, 30, was shot on July 15 by an "unknown" assailant in the National Guard Patrol area, during the coal miners' strike at Wallins Creek, Ky. A day later, *Daniel Noe*, 35, was the second victim of the National Guard attack in the Harlan area.

*Paul Hicks*, member of the Dairy Farmers Union, died of injuries after a strikebreaker's truck crashed into a milk farmer's picket line on August 16 at West Burlington, Pa.

*Angela Treadway*, 54, was shot to death on a picket line at the Dunbar-Dukate Co. cannery on August 25, at Violet, La.

## 1940

*Laura Law*, 25, wife of a CIO Woodworkers Union leader, and mother of a three-year-old son, was brutally murdered in her home on January 5 by a group of vigilantes on the payroll of the lumber interests at Aberdeen, Wash.

*Vito Trimarco*, 38, a business agent of the ILGWU, was shot at the Trio Coat Shop while trying to negotiate the ending of a strike on May 9, in Brooklyn, N. Y.

*Thomas Valentine*, 33, AFL carpenter, was shot by two guards on a non-union highway project on May 22 in Denver, Col.

*Oscar Buckley*, a union picket in the Century Electric Co. strike, was stabbed to death by a strikebreaker on August 7, in St. Louis, Mo.

*John Kennedy*, 32, an AFL electrical union striker, was shot in his home by a hired gunman in New York City on September 3.

*Carl P. Roth*, an AFL striker at the Triangle Conduit & Cable Co., died after a police attack on the picket line on September 7, in New York City.

*Upton Hammond*, 69, an AFL Building Trades worker, was clubbed to death by strikebreakers while picketing in a construction strike in St. Louis, Mo., on October 23.

For the years that follow, complete data on workers killed during strikes are not available. Murder of strikers, however, has not ceased. The incomplete record that follows reveals how prevalent it is in most recent times.

## 1941

*Anthony Nunez*, 26, was killed while picketing the Furniture Mfg. Co. on January 14 in New Orleans, La.

*Oscar Goodwin*, 30, *Virgil Hampton*, 55, *Charles Ruth*, 30, and *Ed Tye*, union miners, met their death by machine-gun fire unleashed by gunmen hired by Brummies Creek Coal Co. on April 2 in Harlan, Ky.

*Sam Evans*, a union miner, was killed by a strikebreaker on April 15 at the Fork Ridge Coal Co., Middlesboro, Ky.

*Arthur Q. Queasbrath*, a member of the Teamsters Union, was killed while on strike duty at the Currier Lumber Co. in Detroit, Michigan, in May.

*Felix Peek*, a Negro miner, was shot by a policeman on June 9 at the International Harvester Co.'s coal mine in Benham, Ky.

*Irving I. Pickover*, 28, was stabbed by a strikebreaker on August 6, during a strike of Local 65, United Wholesale and Warehouse Workers, in New York City.

## 1942

*Henry Matthews*, 37, a Negro union member at the Tennessee Coal & Iron Co., was shot by a city policeman on April 8 while a strike was in progress.

*Jack Bloodworth*, a Negro member of the UMWA, was shot to death on August 13 by Herbert Gray, a company policeman, in Birmingham, Ala.

During the years 1943 and 1944, there were hardly any strike struggles with the notable exception of the coal miners, whose strikes were of brief duration and involved little or no violence.

## 1945

*Walter Campbell*, a Negro worker and an organizer for the Food, Tobacco, Agricultural and Allied Workers Union, was stabbed to death by a scab on December 26 in Little Rock, Ark. The scab went scot-free.

## 1946

*Irwin Paschon*, 27, member of the AFL Brother of Railway Clerks and *Arthur W. Browne*, 40, member of the Locomotive Firemen, were picketing at the Toledo, Peoria and Western railroad in Gridley, Ill. They were shot down, and three others were wounded, by four armed guards when the railroad sent an armored train in a test run manned by strikebreakers.

*Mario Russo*, veteran, 27, father of four children, was shot down in cold blood by hired strikebreakers on July 30 at the Phelps Dodge plant in Elizabeth, N. J.

*Roosevelt Thomas*, 45, and *Will Hunt*, both West Virginia coal miners, met their death when a foreman of a mine shot at them at close range on November 21.

## 1947

*James E. Harris*, a Negro worker and one of the founders of the largest trade union locals in Washington, D. C.—the United Cafeteria Workers—was the leader of a strike in O'Donnell's Restaurant. On April 28, he was brutally murdered in his bed after returning from picket duty.

## 1948

*Roy Cyril*, a Negro worker, member of the Food, Tobacco, Agricultural and Allied Workers Union in New Orleans was shot by a patrolman during a strike.

*San Cicardo*, 38, a picket at the Armour Soap Works in Chicago, was run over by a heavy truck which was waved through the picket line by Police Captain George Barnes, head of the "Labor Detail."

*James Price*, president of Local 218 of the National Farm Labor Union, was shot while presiding over a strike committee meeting in Arvin, Cal.

*Robert New*, Port Agent of the NMU, was attacked on May 7 with a butcher knife in the NMU hiring hall in Charleston, S. C. by Richard Serreo. The confessed killer received the light sentence of 3 years.

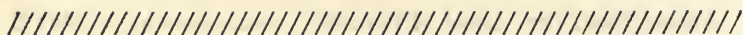
*William Farrell*, 40, member of the United Packinghouse Workers, was shot by a scab while on picket duty at the Roth Packing Co. on May 19, at Waterloo, Iowa.

## 1949

*William Lurye*, executive board member of ILGWU Local 60, AFL, New York, was stabbed to death on May 9 by "persons unknown" in a telephone booth of a building where he was organizing an open shop.

*Ed Hucks*, 54, a picket, employed 25 years at Armour & Co. in National City, Ill., was shot dead by a scab on May 9.





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# White Collar Strikes

A WORD should be said about an unprecedented development in the 30's during the upsurge of organization by the people against the great depression. This highly significant development consisted of white collar organization and the outbreak of several strikes of white collar and professional workers. Prior to the 30's there had been little organization and virtually no strikes by such workers, save for momentary, spontaneous protest actions or strikes in the retail trades.

One of the first effective, union-organized strikes that called nation-wide attention to the plight of white collar workers and gave impetus to their unionization was the strike at Ohrbach's Department Store in New York in 1935, conducted by the Office Workers Union. Victorious after a long and difficult battle, it was marked by the effective action of the *women* workers (office and sales people) who comprised the majority of the strikers.

A number of other strikes occurred in the years after 1935 among office employees, technical workers and engineers, actors, professionals and technicians in entertainment and other fields.

The strike of 370,000 telephone workers in 1947, or-



ganized by a number of loosely cooperating independent unions, included scores of thousands of telephone operators and other categories of white collar workers; again a great number of them were women.

In 1946 the first major strike in the insurance industry took place in the Midwest when some 500 insurance agents of the Monumental Life Insurance Company engaged in a four-week strike under the United Office and Professional Workers of America, CIO, which was successful in winning the workers' demands.

In late spring of 1947 the first real strike took place in the banking industry in the United States when the Brooklyn Trust Company, a major New York bank, was struck by the United Office and Professional Workers, CIO. This strike, involving the 700 employees of the bank, was tradition-breaking. Though it had to be called off after a bitter four-week struggle without victory, it represented a completely new development.

Later, at the end of 1948, 800 white collar workers at the New York Stock Exchange, organized by the Office Workers Union of the AFL, struck for a closed shop and other demands. This strike, marked by the brutality and violence of the New York police, was unsuccessful, and the Stock Exchange magnates wrung a heavy price from the workers in driving them back to work.

These and many other strikes demonstrated that the growth of white collar organization is an important factor in today's labor picture and that white collar workers, despite their history of lack of organization, are capable of waging courageous battles. In particular, the strikes showed the union loyalty and effectiveness of women workers who are of course in the majority in numerous white collar fields.

The strikes also indicate one weakness which labor must overcome, and that is the insufficient support by organized workers in plants, mills and factories of the organization and strikes of white collar workers, to whom all of labor in its own interests must give aid and encouragement.

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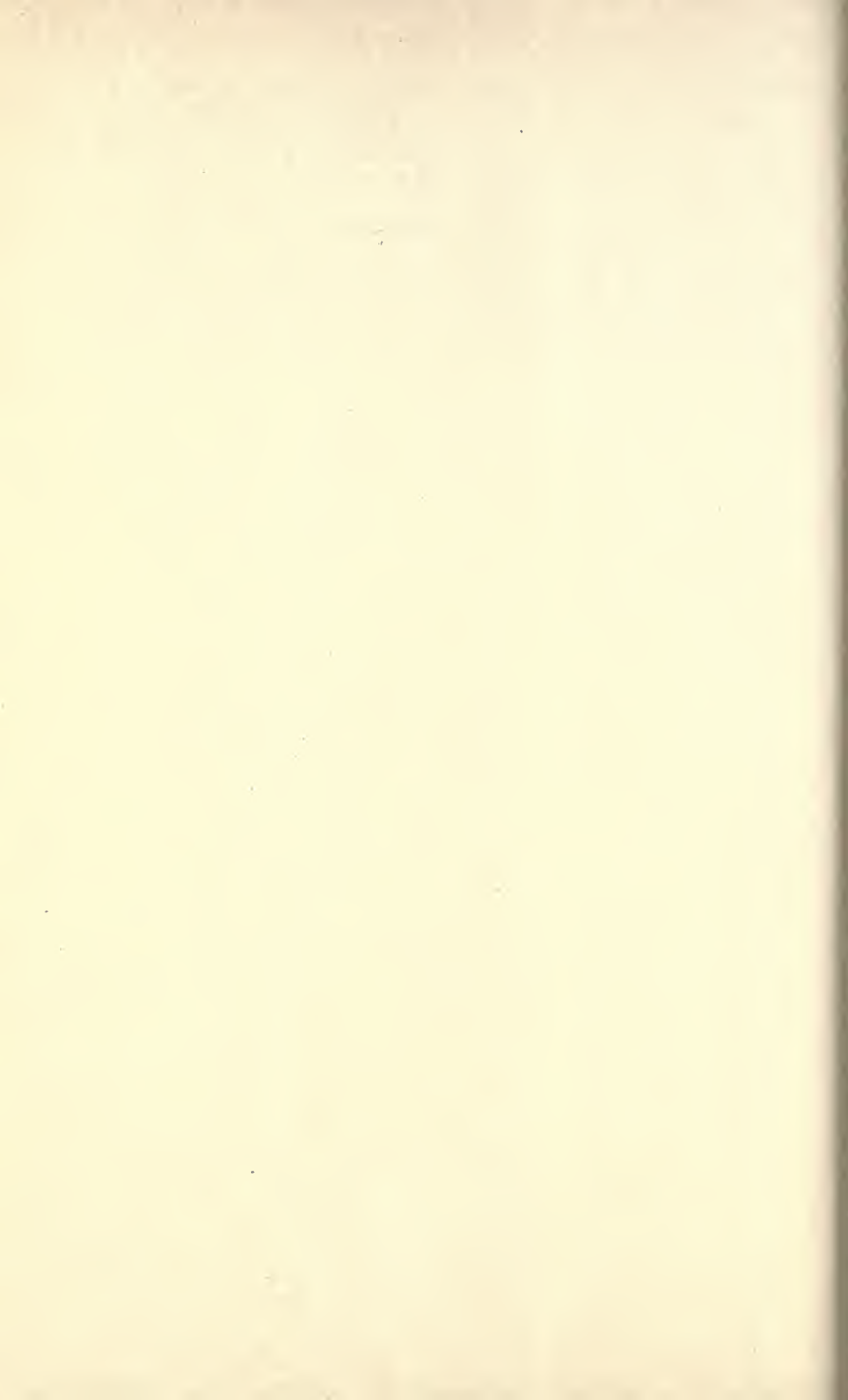
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workers, and he therefore approaches the strike from a new point of view: to seek the necessary countermeasures by drawing lessons from military strategy.

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Mr. Steuben makes clear throughout that the commonly made distinction between "labor" and the "public" is a false one. Labor is a very large part of the public, and in their aspirations toward the inalienable rights guaranteed to all men by the constitution, this book—a study of one way to secure those rights—is an important contribution.

## About the author

John Steuben has been active in the labor movement since his early youth. He was first a machinist who came to understand the problems of workers as a worker himself and later, in 1936, was a member of the original staff of the CIO Steel Workers Organizing Committee. It was the gigantic task of this committee to organize the tens of thousands of steel workers in the Mahoning Valley, one of the largest steel-producing centers in the world.

During this period he came to be "regarded by his fellows," as the *New Republic* said, "as one of the ablest and most conscientious field workers for the CIO."

In 1937 John Steuben's superb qualities as a leader brought him into national prominence in the now famous "Little Steel" strike in which he was an important factor in leading the workers in that conflict which eventually resulted in victory against Tom Girdler, head of Republic Steel.

Mr. Steuben is also the author of the book *Labor in Wartime*, an analysis of labor relations during World War I. He is at present Secretary-Treasurer of the New York Hotel Front Service Employees Union A. F. of L.

